



*Once we surrender our mind to God completely,
He will take care of us in every way.*

- Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, India



Celebrating
SRI SATHYA SAI
BALVIKAS

50 YEARS
& more...



**I am you; you are ME. You are the waves; I am the ocean.
Know this and be free, be divine.**



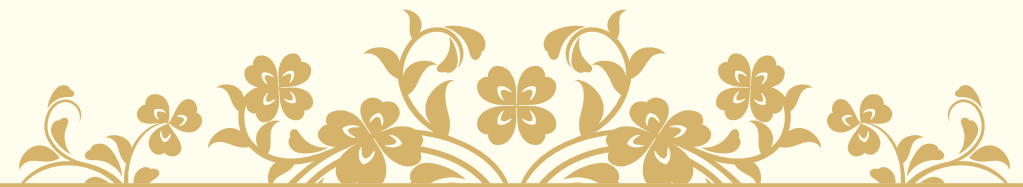
"There is only one God and He is omnipresent",
"God is love, live in love!"



Celebrating
**SRI SATHYA SAI
BALVIKAS**
50^{YEARS}
and more...



Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, India





Celebrating Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas 50 Years And More

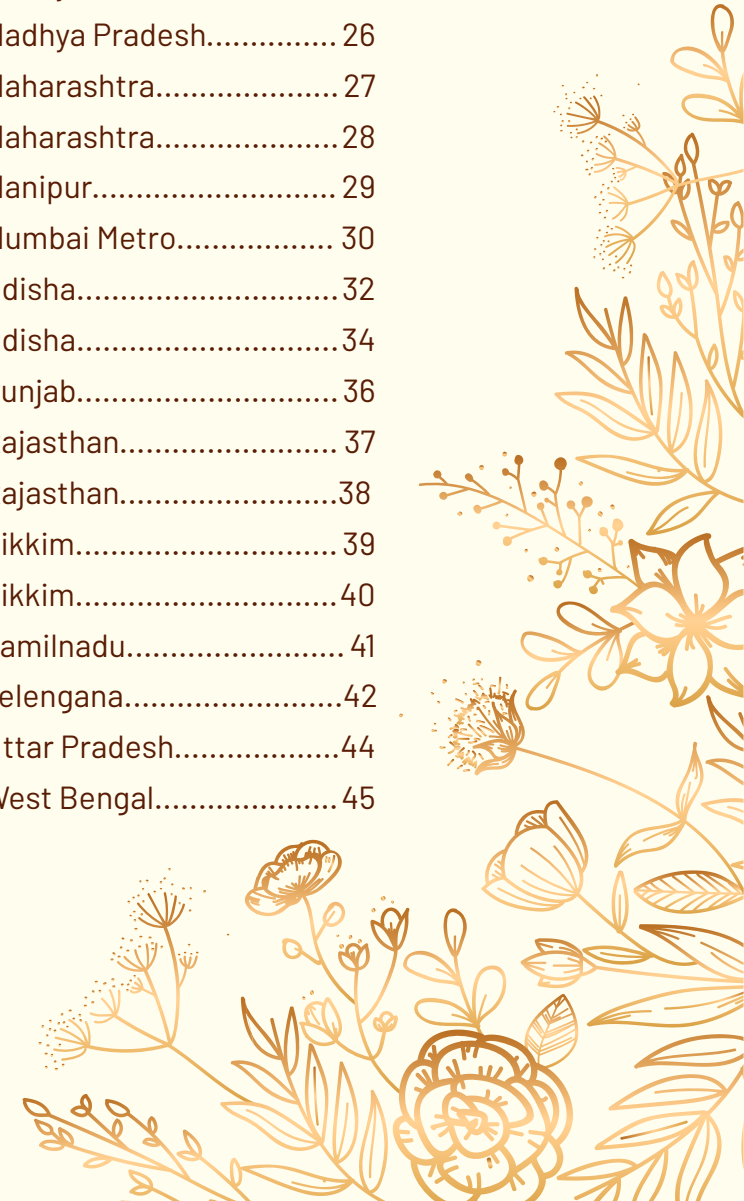
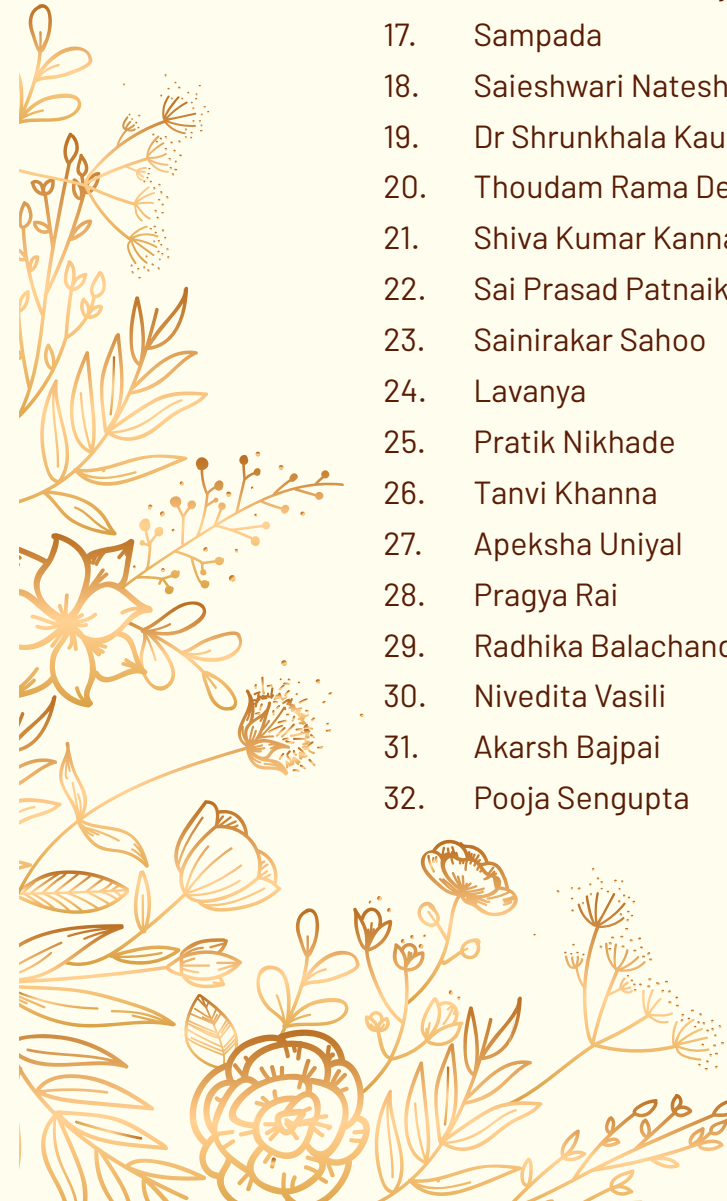
Copyright @ Sri Sathya Sai Books And Publication Trust
Mahakali Caves Rd, Near Ginger Hotel, Sri Sathya Sai Chowk,
Andheri East, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400093
All rights reserved.

04/01/2020



CONTENT

1.	Foreword.....	05
2.	Dr Lavanya Bennuru Andra Pradesh.....	07
3.	Dr Aditi Das Assam.....	09
4.	Nandita Sharma Assam.....	10
5.	Aditya Nath Jha Bihar.....	12
6.	M Sai Pratap Chatisgarh.....	13
7.	Satyanarayana Kota Delhi.....	14
8.	Pallavi Tripathy Delhi.....	15
9.	Sunetra Kamat Tarcar Goa.....	16
10.	Rachit Hiraskar Gujarat.....	17
11.	Kajal Chaudhary Haryana.....	19
12.	Rajni Suri Himachal Pradesh.....	20
13.	Bhairl Sai Vallika Jharkhand.....	22
14.	Padma Krishnan Karnataka.....	23
15.	Kaushik M Kerala.....	24
16.	Dr Surabhi Avasthy Madhya Pradesh.....	25
17.	Sampada Madhya Pradesh.....	26
18.	Saieshwari Nateshan Maharashtra.....	27
19.	Dr Shrunkhala Kaushik Maharashtra.....	28
20.	Thoudam Rama Devi Manipur.....	29
21.	Shiva Kumar Kannan Mumbai Metro.....	30
22.	Sai Prasad Patnaik Odisha.....	32
23.	Sainirakar Sahoo Odisha.....	34
24.	Lavanya Punjab.....	36
25.	Pratik Nikhade Rajasthan.....	37
26.	Tanvi Khanna Rajasthan.....	38
27.	Apeksha Uniyal Sikkim.....	39
28.	Pragya Rai Sikkim.....	40
29.	Radhika Balachandran Tamilnadu.....	41
30.	Nivedita Vasili Telengana.....	42
31.	Akarsh Bajpai Uttar Pradesh.....	44
32.	Pooja Sengupta West Bengal.....	45





FOREWORD

Sai Ram!

It is indeed very exciting to read the outstanding of expression of love and devotion of the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas Alumni and students who have presented herein the same as a compilation in the form of essays on the occasion of the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas Benediction Day.

Another year has dawned, giving us yet another wonderful opportunity to serve at His Lotus Feet. This year is indeed even more unique, as it marks the 50th year of the Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Movement.

Fifty years and more is a time not only for all the Sri Sathya Sai Alumni to relive the journey of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas but also a time for the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas to continue to strengthen the edifice of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. This is possible only by the Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas, who have spent nine formative years of their childhood and have evolved tall, dedicated and inspiring members of society.

The essays contained in this compilation are a great source of inspiration for all those who read them and validate the fact that Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas brings forth youth with strong personality, sterling character and good habits showing the correct path to all mankind.

The Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas alumni and children through their example have ensured that the generations to come will not lock up the Glory of Sri Sathya Sai in a class or in a book but will be a model for all to follow and so let us join hands with the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas Alumni and without much delay, light the lamp of love, first, within our hearts and then, in turn in the hearts of all in society.

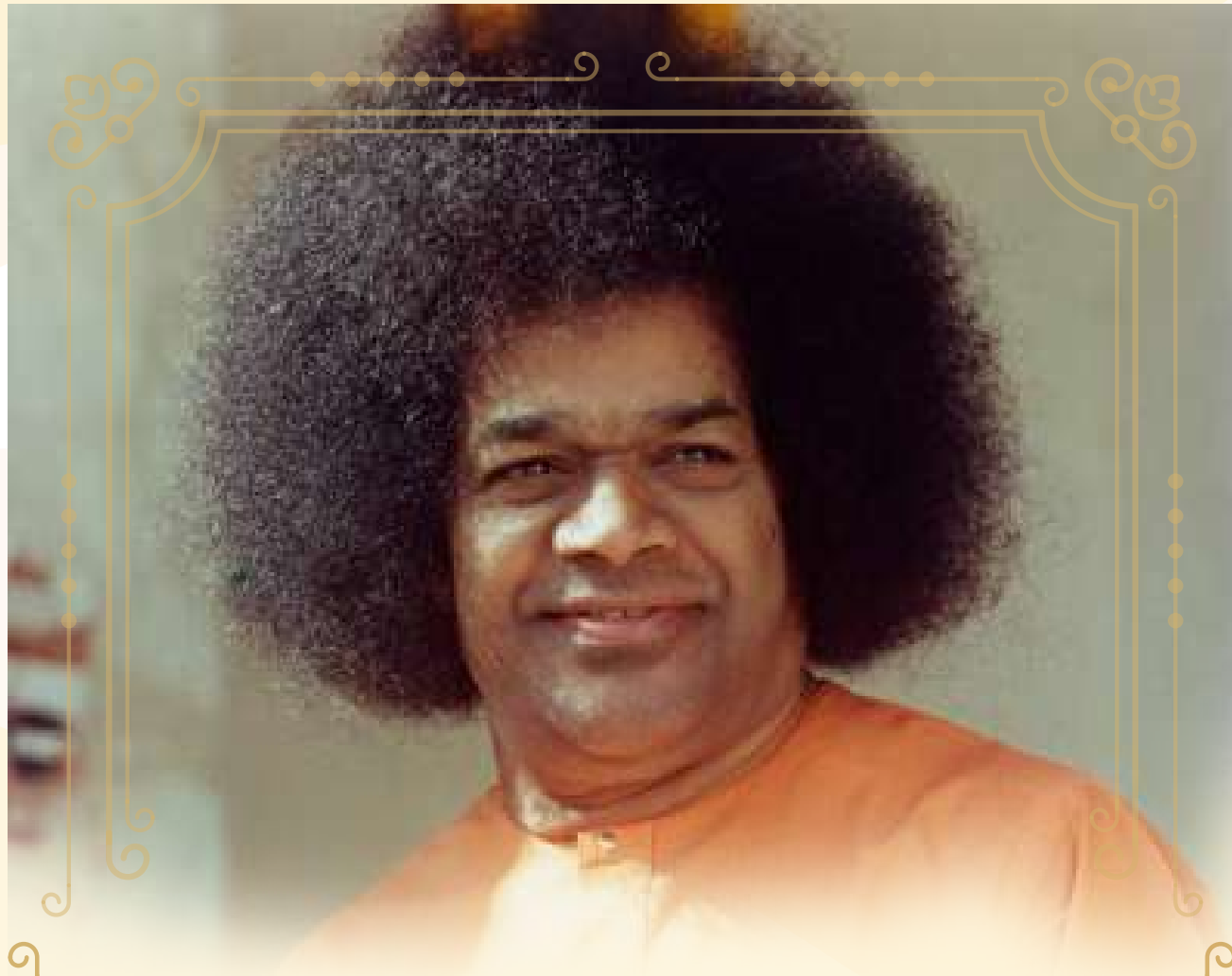
Come, let us join hands and march ahead with love in our hearts, purity in thought, word and deed, so that in the year to come, the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas Alumni can become the true harbingers of goodwill and happiness.

With lots of love.

Nimish Pandya

All India President

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, India



Life is a song - sing it.

Life is a game - play it.

Life is a challenge - meet it.

Life is a dream - realize it.

Life is a sacrifice - offer it.

Life is love - enjoy it.



Dr Lavanya Bennuru

Andhra Pradesh

“When the sun rises and shines, not all lotus buds in the lakes and ponds bloom, only those that are ready, do”... Many are born, but a chosen few bloom through Balvikas to serve the lord in his divine mission.

It was a boon in my life to unfold myself as a lotus in his divine hands through Balvikas at a tender age of six, when my mother took all the four of us to my Balvikas Guru...My Role Model and an idealistic person I have ever met. Every Sunday was the most jubilant day of the week for which I waited eagerly for. The songs, dances, the most interesting stories that created a passion in me for balvikas. After balvikas class, the Narayana seva, Temple cleaning and many more. Those are the “Golden Moments of my Life”. Years passed by, Swami blessed my journey of life from a balvikas student to a guru to serve him in his divine mission.

I happened to pass by one of my Balvikas Student's house, his mother ran to me and invited me to visit their house. Her eyes filled with tears of joy over poured in her words when she said “I failed in my efforts in making my son realise the importance of being truthful, but you made it” and affectionately hugged me. She continued “My son came home crying from Balvikas class, and said that “SWAMI IS WATCHING ME ALWAYS, HE KNOWS EVERYTHING”. Today while we were playing the

game on Discrimination of Good and Bad, our team lost when I picked up the chit of “being untruthful”, so, I promise that “I WILL NEVER EVER LIE AGAIN”. Swami is present in every balvikas class and he implants the seeds of human values in every tender heart and transforms them through the gurus.

The impact of Balvikas in my journey of life is immense. Bhagawan was throughout guiding and guarding me at every bend of my life. Listening to his voice was probably the result of silent sitting at balvikas through which Swami taught me that “Silence is Sai Lens and it is the speech of the spiritual seeker”. Through this practice in Balvikas, swami helped me to attain “Sthithapragnyata” to a great extent which was the most critical task to great yogis. While narrating stories, swami taught the children the human values, and to me “Practice before you Preach” thereby making Balvikas a workshop to transform myself and the children.

Experiencing the nectar of his love through Balvikas... nourished, enriched and bloomed my life. He embraced my life with bliss by choosing me to serve as his instrument in his divine mission. Blessed to be a flute in the hands of my dearest Lord wherein he blows life into me. Bhagawan is the Torch of our Life and the light emanating is Balvikas.

Swami Bless all of us to spread his message of love and human values.



Dr Aditi Das
Assam

The Bhagavad Gita says

**Yada Yada Hi Dharmasya, Glanir Bhavati Bharata
Abhyutthanam Adharmasya, Tadatmanam Srjamy Aham
Paritranya Sadhunam, Vinasaya Ca Duskrtam
Dharma-Samsthapanarthaya, Sambhavami Yuge Yuge**

Meaning, whenever and wherever there is decline in religious practice (righteous living), and there is a predominant rise of irreligion, O descendant of Bharata, at that time I descend....in order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to re-establish the principles of religion (righteousness), I rise from age to age

And, truly, Kali Yuga witnessed the Glory of our Beloved Lord, Bhagawan Sri Satya Sai Baba, The Avatar of our times, at a time when India was passing through a period of transition from colonial rule to an independent nation, to be ruled by Indians, keeping Indian culture, thought and ideology as its foundation. Bhagawan, who is omniscient, knew well in advance, that the future generation, who would rule our country in particular and the world in general, would inevitably need guidance for inculcating values that would make them true leaders-leaders who are honest, leaders who are dutiful and truthful, leaders who profess love for humanity and leaders who lead from the front, with a clear conscience supplemented by purity of thought and its co-ordination with word and deed.

Swami, the Avatar of our times, a true Educationist and a Reformer, very well gauged the social scenario prevailing in the early 60's and as such emphasized on the need to promote education in human values

among the young children. Swami believed that, just as degradation starts in society, in the same manner the panacea for putting a check to this degrading social norms and restlessness also exist in society itself. With His life as a message to follow, Bhagawan embarked upon a very subtle way of making each young child responsible for transforming the society by proclaiming- '**Your Life is My Message**'. Bhagawan not only directed us to become **social and moral messengers**, but just like a nourishing mother, designed the curriculum for the same, which He lovingly called '**Sri Sathya Sai BAL VIKAS**.'

Launched by Bhagawan Sri Satya Baba in 1969, Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Programme rests on the four pillars of Swami's **Sanatan Dharma**. viz., '**Satya**', '**Dharma**', '**Shanti**' and '**Prem**'. Today, after 50 years of its existence, Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas has grown into a worldwide movement.....a universally accepted curriculum of human transformation which helps in laying the foundation of the basic principles of Satya (Truth), Dharma (Righteousness), Shanti (Peace), Prem (Love) and Ahimsa (Non-Violence) in the young minds and thereby blossoming the young children into complete humans in true sense of being one..... unique, creative, righteous and worthy.

Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas is a 'Divine Opportunity'. The youngsters who are blessed with this



Opportunity are the 'Chosen Ones', 'The Blessed Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas is not just an educational programme. It is the essence of all spiritual knowledge, the practical way of righteous upbringing of the young, the innocent and the ignorant. Through the chanting of Omkara, Veda Stutis, Slokas and Bhajans, the young children unknowingly enter the complex world of spiritual awakening with much ease. The roots of their spiritual path are planted and firmly grounded at a very tender age, in a very delicate and subtle way in the Bal Vikas class by the Guru. Whatever seed is planted, corresponding tree sprouts out... this is the law of nature. When seeds of human and moral excellence are sown at a young age, they become deep rooted in an individual and consequently become his or her second nature. Bhagawan's Bal Vikas programme is so tactfully designed that it is all comprehensive, contemporary and is in itself a lifelong experience of exhaustive learning.

Teachings of Bal Vikas forms the pathway to Lok Vikas, thereby fostering in an individual the spirit of 'Manav Seva' (Service to Mankind), the highest form of 'Madhav Seva'(Service to God) and at the same time helps one to strive for Universal Love and Brotherhood through selfless service to mankind irrespective of caste, creed, colour, sex, nationality and creed.

Bal Vikas teaches one to be fearless humans, who have the patience, perseverance and spiritual logic to listen to the Voice of the Conscience, be truthful, not only to others but to oneself and thus strike a balance in one's thought, word and action.

Education in Human Values is the need of the hour. Modern education, no doubt, bestows the highest form of knowledge to an individual, thereby preparing him to meet the material challenges of life, but has failed miserably to lay the holistic foundation in a modern man. Every young man should be taught not only to establish himself or herself as a successful professional, earning handsome pay packages but to strive for moral excellence and prove to the world that humanity still exists in society. Policy makers should embark upon developing curriculum that would help a young student excel in all fields of human activity social, political and spiritual. And in this regard the curriculum followed in Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Programme is the best suitable option.



Nandita Sarma

Assam

Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas - "The Boon". Going down memory lane, I strongly feel that Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas is indeed the boon of assurance and insurance given to mankind. As it is rightly said, Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas gives assurance for all good and insurance against all evils. Being born in a Sai family, I had the opportunity to be a Sathya Sai Bal Vikas student from a tender age. Like an icing on the cake, my mother Ms. Uma Goswami, was my Bal Vikas guru too.

Now, with age I realise, gone are those days - those golden days, those golden moments and am left with the benefits of reliving the same. Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas, which I attended every Sunday morning from 9 am to 10.30 am at our residence was a class with a difference. Something which school education could not cover.

The spiritual aspect of a child's development for holistic progress could be completed only because of the Bal Vikas classes.

Those moments if I recall now were too precious. We the children who regularly attended Bal Vikas classes, can observe now its impact upon our personality. We experience a positive impact of scriptures, ancient texts and Holy books on our thought process. The contents from China Katha, Ramayana and Mahabharata and other stories from different Religion made us quite enlightened and which we are passing on to the younger generation presently. Knowing the two epics thoroughly created an indelible impression on our minds. The impact of those stories and relating them to the present-day situations is helping in emotional balancing.

Yes, gone are those days when all the children of our locality, would come to attend the Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas class. Starting with "Sai Ram Guru Maa", sitting in Padma - asana, back bone straight, starting with three Omkara and Ganesh sloka, followed by other slokas. The entire room would vibrate with the chanting of around 25-30 children of different age groups.

Learning to sing Bhajans and listen to the stories being narrated by "Guru Maa". The most awaited moment, **'flash back effect'**: way back to the year 1976 and the years that followed. We would always eagerly wait for 6th of May to come. "Eashwaramma Day" What fun and frolic. We used to have programmes in "Jur-Pukhuri Sai Baba Mandir" in Guwahati (Assam). Students of Bal Vikas from various centers would come to participate. Competitions were organized. Rangoli, Recitation, go as you like, Bhajan, Skit and what not. The best part was "Narayan Seva". What a pleasure it was to serve them.

We learned so many things Slokas, Stories, Bhajans, Social Service, Meditation, Dramatization, to mention a few. Leadership qualities also developed in us.

1979, the most memorable year, when along with our guide, Devobala Chaliha Baidew we five Bal Vikas students were selected to perform in front of Bhagawan Sri Satya Sai Baba the skit of "Sarva Dharma" in the Poornachandra Hall. Bhagawan Baba after our performance on the backstage gave toffees, simply by moving his hand.

Can't forget "Sai Katha" the Dance Drama which we



performed twice. Once in 'Rabindra Bhavan' and once in 'District Library'. I took the role of "Sai Baba". Just because I was a Bal Vikas student, I got this opportunity. How much learning took place. What positive environment, how we managed studies even after participating in the Bal Vikas functions. Thanks to Rupak Dada.

Being a Bal Vikas student, I learnt to be humble, honest, spiritual, polite, helpful, simple, understanding, obedient, respectful and kind. These wonderful qualities would have remained dormant, but Bal Vikas gave an opportunity to bring them to the forefront and be a part of my personality. The evils and

negativity which tends to dominate at times, do not get an upper hand. Those golden moments taught me the five D's - Duty, Discipline, Devotion, Dedication and Discrimination. Taught me to respect parents, siblings, other religion and every profession. Developed my communication skill, made me smart, work for the society and above all my decision-making skill grew.

So lucky, so lucky I was to get a chance to become a Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas student. Without any doubt those were my GOLDEN MOMENTS. Lastly, I again extend my humble pranams to Bhagawan Sri Satya Sai Baba for bestowing His grace upon me.



Aditya Nath Jha
Bihar



Sathya Sai Bal Vikas in the early years of childhood provides platform for inculcating values and opportunities for the children to move on the path of moral education and spiritual development.

As it has been known through research that early formative years are very important for holistic development which takes place in these years highly influences attitudes, values, mind-set of a person. Balvikas, through value-based guidance in these initial years of life brings a profound impact on person's personality.

Bal Vikas classes emphasis on Ethical development enhances our ethical quotient and understanding which acts as a prudent source to guide us on the path of integrity and to tackle dilemmas of real-life issues either professional, personal or social.

In the classes of Bal Vikas every child is special and treated equally, without any distinction of caste, class and religion. So Balvikas is in excellent medium to break these barriers of caste, creed and religion, provides occasion to celebrate religion of humanity and foster universal brotherhood.

This aspect of balvikas is seminal not only for the people who are sai bhaktas (devotees) but will help in building society and nation which will be free from discrimination and united in spirit.

In Bal Vikas, children get opportunities to participate in creative acts like plays, narration of legend and stories, singing dancing etc. Also, being part of audience enables one to develop these skills which inculcate value, capability to express oneself, shapes belief and self confidence in children.

Ultimately all these things help in shaping personality when children grow into person.

Bal Vikas classes through its emphasis on moral values, spiritual guidance and focus on service and seva help child to make distinction between good and bad. Bal Vikas alumni are better placed in a sense that they invest their energy in seva and work which will make differences in life of others rather than splurging on some worldly things.

Alumni of balvikas are reaching pinnacle in their respective careers, be it a doctor, public service, business etc. and delivering apt professional and personal competence their high moral orders and leadership qualities promote humanitarian values in their organisation and domains with Bal Vikas acting as their guiding path, they also stand as role model for others in society.

Bal Vikas proved a milestone in life of those, lucky person, who got an opportunity to be a part of it, as a child. It made them messenger for sai mission and value of sai like sathya, dharma, shanti, prema, ahimsa and manav seva Madhav seva.



M Sai Pratap
Chhattisgarh

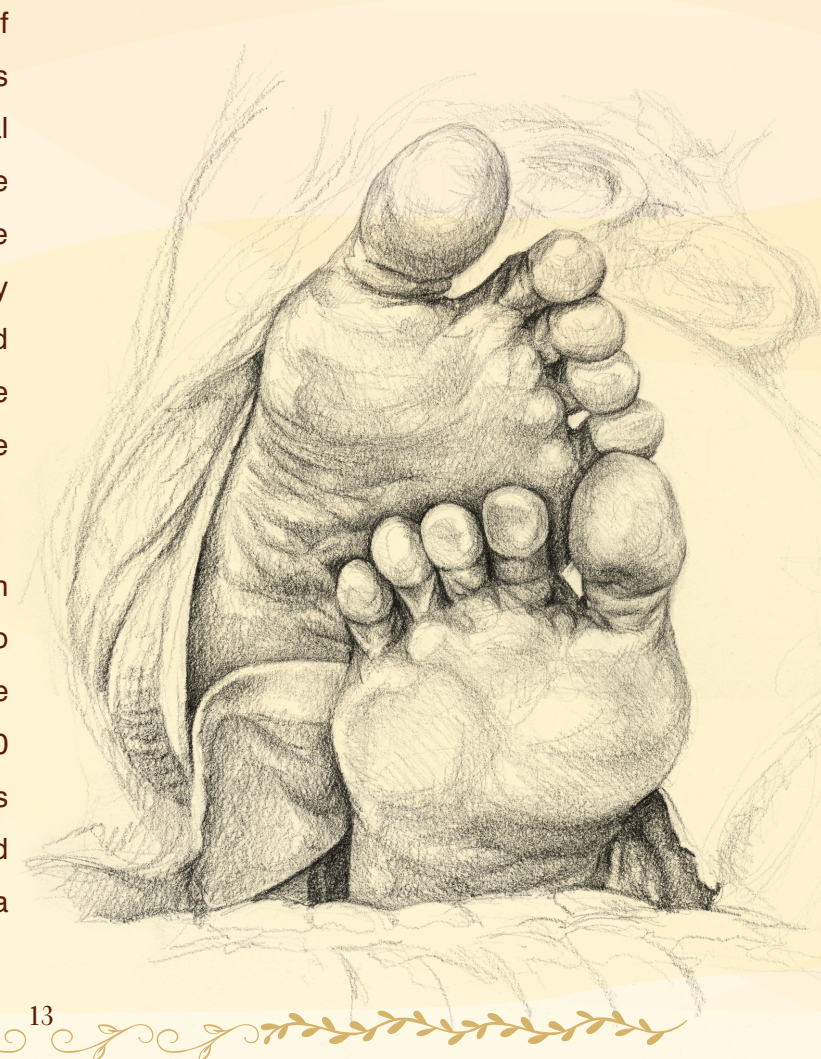


"SRI SATHYA SAI BAL-VIKAS" simply means enrichment of children by inculcating moral teachings to them; but is that all about it? This question arose when I analyzed myself for some time. We all attended Balvikas classes in our childhood with very high excitement, without fail or delay, with the innocent pride of remembering the lessons learnt in the previous class and now I understand where it has brought me...

As a regular child- initially as a student of Balvikas and later on a student in one of swami's school, I never came to acknowledge the real importance of things we learned, be it value based games that we played, stotram's and the stories of the deities that were recited. It's only when I progressed from the student life and started facing the challenges of the competitive life, I realized that those learnings stood with me like a guru that guided me from time to time.

Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's vision for which he laid the responsibility on Balvikas gurus to establish the values in this world can now be seen as a worldwide phenomenon. In the past 50 years or so, students of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas have succeeded in various different fields and made a name for themselves. I feel Sri Sathya

Sai Balvikas is a system, which develops our confidence, belief system, presence of mind and ability to judge the right and wrong all throughout life. The games that we played in Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas installed in us, the sportive sprit that's required in real life. Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas is a blessing and becoming a Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas student is a boon.





Satyanarayana Kota
Delhi, NCR

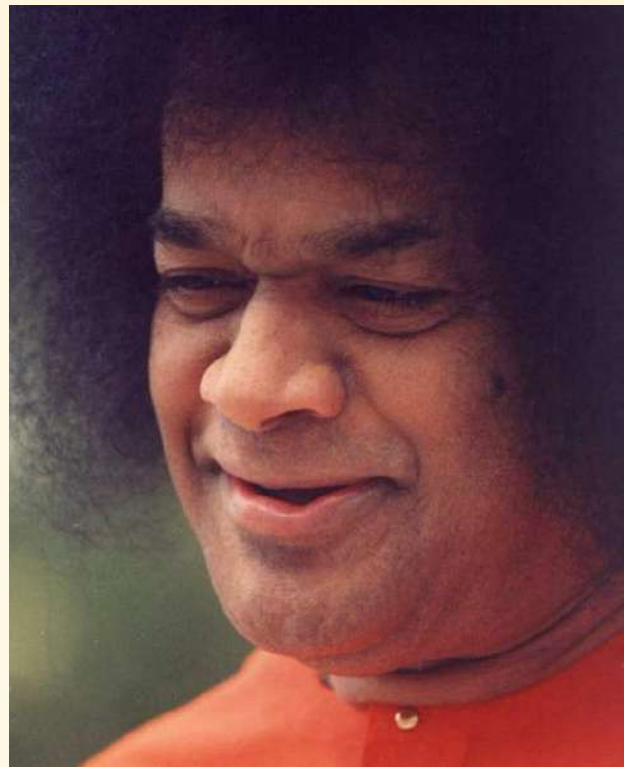
As Bhagwan Baba once said academic education helps in 'Living Skills' while Education in Human Values build 'Life Skills'. Human values are inherent in every individual and it must be manifested and applied for the benefit of the society.

Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas provides that platform which makes a child learn the most important subject in his life i.e. 'Life Skills'. The unique methodology of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas is what made me look forward for every Tuesday, so that I can visit my guru and listen to interesting new stories. At the age of 9, I never thought that these short stories had such big lessons hidden behind them and these stories will shape me into a person I am today. Balvikas' vision of imparting education through the methodology of storytelling, enacting plays and singing bhajans is what makes it unique and interesting for a child.

I would like to throw light on one activity which was performed in our class and it was after this day that I started seeing the world as a better place. We were asked to make a 'Happy Newspaper'. Every day in the newspaper we used to read about the horrifying things happening in our society and about all the negativity spread around the world. I feel as a child it did affect me and made me think about the society, we live in. During this session we were asked to cut out articles of all the good stories happening around the world and make a 'Happy newspaper'. I didn't realize at that time what it meant but now I see that

what it taught me was perception, it is how I see the world. If I see good, I feel good. It was these small things which help build the character of a person and eventually help in building a better future.

The current system does not throw much emphasis on the character growth of a child. Balvikas aims at inculcating good habits in the child so that the child grows up into an ideal citizen – an asset not only to his parents but to the society, nation, and world at large. And as the motto goes 'Transforming Self to Transform the World' is why I can proudly say Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas will be the ray of hope for the future.



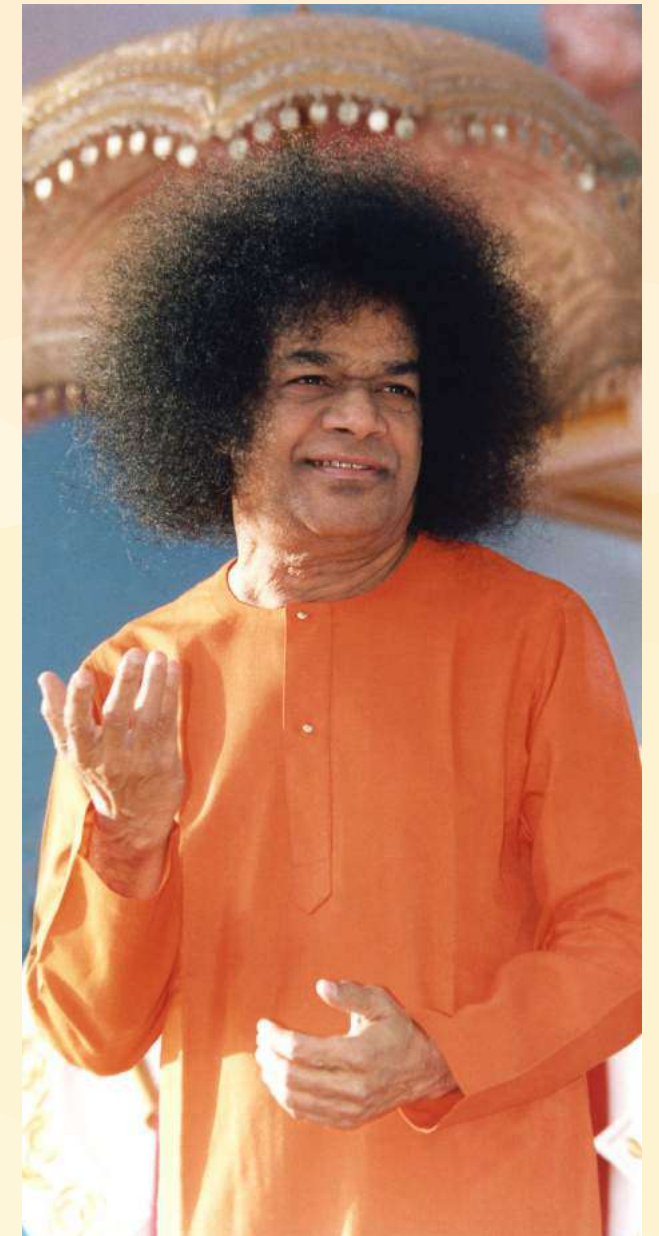
Pallavi Tripathy
Delhi-NCR

Sri Sathya Sai Baba and our gurus of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas classes have been the torch bearers of great knowledge, morality, integrity and righteousness. My gurus have always been tremendous mentors to me and have taught me the true meaning of life. Balvikas and our Gurus have guided the young buds on the main principles that Baba have laid, which are- Satya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema and Ahimsa. Every Shloka, Story and Bhajan has a strong learning behind it. Also, the attractive ways that our gurus used to explain to us the moral values behind the stories created a huge impact on our minds. I remember as a child I used to wait for Saturdays for my Balvikas classes as we used to have fun exciting memory and quiz games, distribution of Sai Ram chocolates and great team building activities. Later as I grew I realised that those were not just games and rewards, they were gifts in the form of blessings from Swami, and that I was amongst the privileged kids to get the opportunity to learn and understand the moral values at a young age that would help me to build a strong and confident character.

Besides the fact that my parents were extremely happy and proud that I was learning the true great values, the aura of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas was so strong that people who were unaware of the spirituality and morality used to get thrilled and exhilarated after listening to the Shlokas and Bhajans.

Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas has made a huge impact on every child who has been associated with Baba and

his teachings. Balvikas students have always been under Swami's blessings and guidance and I am sure Swami will continue to shower his blessings on his Balvikas students.





Sunetra Kamat Tarcar

Goa

I am thankful to our Master for choosing me, from amongst the million others to be a part of His mission and for giving me this Divine opportunity to be a part of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation from when I was a little girl of four!

'Catch them young' yes. Sri Sathya Sai balvikas is our Masters way of catching young children to mould us into ideal citizens and providing us a systematic platform to serve our fellow brothers and sisters. It is an ultimate pleasure when you realise that balvikas does not end at receiving the Group Three certificate, rather the personal experience, teachings of balvikas and the habits inculcated therein have become an inseparable part of my life. Habits like daily prayers, believing that God is the doer, having self awareness of being an instrument of God has become as regular as breathing in pure air. As we inhale the pure and exhale the toxic, teachings at Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas have given me the strength to identify the right and the wrong, to selectively take up good around me and give off the bad within me.

Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas back then as a student and now as a guru is a time to remind ourselves what Swami expects from us to be called His messengers. Every time I meet a new person, it feels good to receive compliments like "it felt nice talking to u", "it felt different from usual being in your company", "how could you be so calm in such a chaotic situation?", "how can u keep silent when he/she is continuously blaming you inspite of our sincere explanations?", "where does all your patience and understanding come from?". A simple reply to all these exclamations is being in constant God's company from a very young age. It brings a feeling of achievement to be an inspiration to people around you of your own age, behaving like an ideal- brings in

a sense of curiosity among your fellow members to know where we get these qualities from and here comes the right time to introduce Our Divine guru to them, to expand our Sai family with interested, like minded members.

Fear of failure is a major reason for lack in self confidence. 'Why fear when I am here' is one of Swamis sayings very close to my heart. In spite of being capable there have been times you tend to mess up the activity on having a preoccupied mind with thoughts of 'is this right or wrong', ' what if I am not able to give my 100%' but when you learn to experience the presence of Your Master within you, being able to listen to His instructions, believing in the fact that Swami will always guide you in the right direction, it brings in confidence and accuracy to complete the task you have taken up. Overcoming your weakness with confidence that God is with you, within you, around you, above you and below you is a wonderful takeaway gift I have received from balvikas. For every big and small decision in my life, My Lord has always guided me in the right direction, Swami has given me what is meant for me without even asking for it! He knows the best ways to keep me happy forever.

In the last twenty years of being a part of Balvikas, it has been a major phase of receiving Swami's message from my gurus. In the years to come, I would love to continue as a Balvikas guru to give away what I have received from Sri Sathya Sai balvikas. For me, my balvikas gurus have always been my inspiration, may Swami give me the strength to be an inspiration to the students who attend my class too. May Swami give me all the energy to serve in His mission. Like always I am sure Swami will be with me forever..... till then 'KEEP CALM AND FOLLOW SAIRAM'!



Rachit Vilas Hiraskar

Gujarat

Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas is the great movement to restore Dharma in the World. Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas was launched in 1969, when Bhagawan, expressed the need for providing children with facilities for imbibing their rich spiritual and cultural heritage. Addressing the Mahila vibhag in 1969 'Baba' directed the ladies to run a Balvihar for the children where they will listen to stories from the scriptures, the epics and the lives of saints belonging to all religions. Teach children to sing bhajans, and introduce them to 'dhyana' & 'japa'. Let this be inculcated at a young age.

Five minutes of prayer and another five minutes of dhyana will be a good exercise to practice daily and lead to formation of a good habit. The tender mind has to be fed with good thoughts. Thus, at the very outset, Baba introduced simple techniques like storytelling, prayer, group activities, meditation and bhajans to the children. Never in the history of mankind have the children of the world received such a unique boon as the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas movement.

My parents were blessed to be chosen by Swami to be in his fold and with the ambience of Swami's teachings in our house; I joined Balvikas at the age of five.

Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas classes impart traditional, conventional and ancient knowledge through five most powerful techniques like prayer, silent sitting, group singing, group activities and storytelling. This makes Balvikas children understand teachings like 'God is Love' and inspires students from the childhood to 'Love All, Serve All' and 'Help Ever, Hurt Never'. This is the essence of Vedas and our ancient

culture. It also teaches to respect all religion.

I offer my humble pranams to all my "Gurus" who were instrumental to mold and transform me as per the principles laid out in Balvikas.

There is always a reason why Bhagwan chooses you, and I understood the meaning of the same when I got the golden opportunity to perform in a play at Kulwant Hall. I now feel extremely responsible to carry forward and spread the mission of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas program and impart human values to thousands of children who are devoid of this education.

The first and foremost thing, I commit myself to get trained as a Balvikas Guru and follow the principles of Bhagwan Baba

1. Periodic meetings and interacting with my other batch mates, planning of street plays on mythological stories in malls, parks, schools and residential societies.

2. To convince school principals before the academic year planning to amalgamate the Balvikas syllabus with the school academic curriculum and start in one class on an experimental basis.

Earlier Swami used to say - "My Life is My Message"

Later Swami has said - "Your Life Will be My Message"

Therefore I will conduct myself as an ambassador of peace and love and stand committed to Swami's statement.

"Thank You Swami, Love You Swami"



*Science without discrimination
Human existence without discipline
Friendship without gratitude
Music without melody
A society without morality and justice
Cannot be of benefit to the people*



Kajal Chaudhary
Haryana

LIVE A LIFE THAT MATTERS
LIVE A LIFE OF LOVE

A building will stand for long with a strong foundation and a tree will stand with its strong roots. In the same way a child would stand strong if his/her moral values would be strong enough to face all the difficulties of life. These values will bear fruits only if delivered from the childhood.

Let me share a short story of a small girl. There was a girl who was very naughty. She didn't like to share her belongings with anyone, used to get jealous very easily if someone praised the other child but not her. Because of her nature she was liked by a few people. But there was something which our beloved Swami liked about her. So the Lord of Universe gave her an opportunity to be a Balvikas student. The girl started going to the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas classes. She used to enjoy everything taught in the class. Her mother started taking her for bhajans also. Slowly and gradually she learnt the lesson of patience. As she was growing, she learnt discipline, compassion, sacrifice and many other good values. The greatest thing was that she was so allured by the teaching that she followed everything in true spirit. The amazing thing was that her habit of getting jealous got reduced and she started loving, caring and sharing. Everything went well but one thing happened, as her classes increased, the marks started decreasing. The dream of getting 100% marks she desired was now

becoming impossible. But then her guru helped her to believe in herself and surrender to mother Sai. She worked hard and the result was that she got 93% marks in her 12th. For her it was a great gift. But then a new phase came into the girl's life with new challenges i.e. College life. Keeping Swami always with her she entered the college life. Swami the most affectionate guide helped her everyday to bloom and rise. The girl is none other than me. I am not a writer but our merciful Lord has made me to pen down my own experience.

I personally believe that things will only happen if we believe in them to happen. In the same way, Swami responds to our prayers each moment for the reason that Swami is with us 'Always'. I am really thankful to my Balvikas Gurus who played an integral role in inculcating values in me and from the bottom of my heart, I am thankful to Swami to make me a Balvikas child at a very tender age. Balvikas really brings a positive change in behaviour and character that would certainly help to bring peace not only in our country but also to the entire world.

"People will come and go, children will come and grow, Shri Sathya Sai Balvikas will always shine like the Sun to make Balvikas children glow everywhere forever."



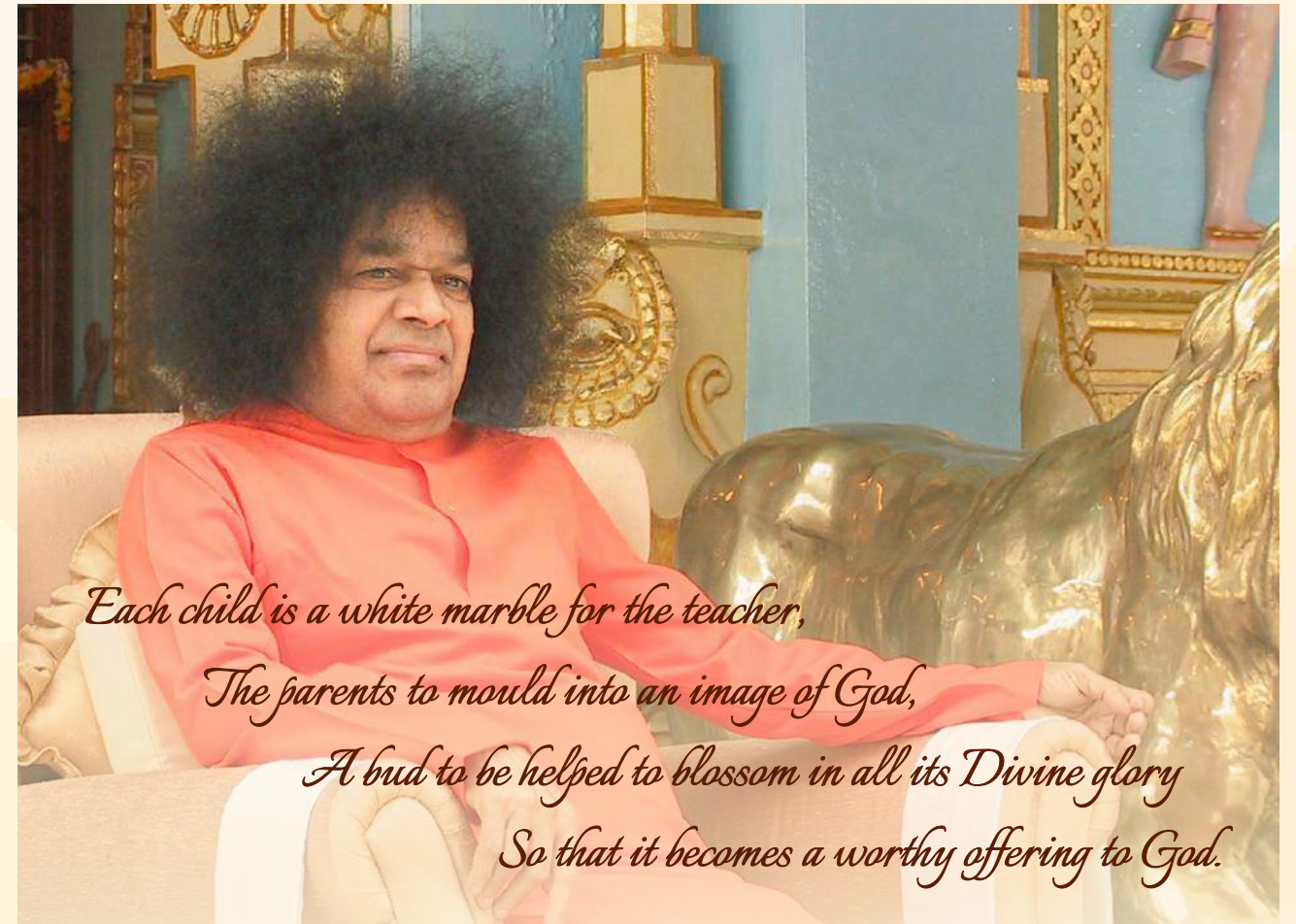
Rajni Suri
Himachal Pradesh

It is a privilege to convey my experiences with Bhagawan Baba that motivated me, inspired me and energized me to effortlessly carry out my personal works as well as my devotion to Bhagawan. With the blessings and grace of Bhagawan Baba, I never felt alone in my life. He was with me, around me and in me always. And this is how I was able to meet all obstacles with courage.

Every creature that takes birth in this world gets the environment and resources according to the karma/deeds that he has accomplished in previous births. I'm absolutely convinced that I have done good deeds in my previous births which gave me blessings, darshan and education of Bhagawan in this birth. My life in Sathya Sai Family started at the time when I was an adolescent. I am very lucky to be enrolled as a Bal Vikas Student in childhood which helped me realise the divine embodiment of Bhagawan. This great experience of learning at Bal Vikas was a building block in my life. In the Year 1978, when my family and I shifted to Shimla, I along with my friend started attending Bal Vikas. I was lucky to have spiritual atmosphere at my home and Bal Vikas taught me to be disciplined in life. It also taught to lead a simple life yet have high thinking. Bal Vikas motivated me to be truthful and honest. The same seed that was reaped in my childhood became a fruit bearing tree eventually. Chanting of various mantras like those for early morning, before having meals, before sleep etc. have a deep effect in my life and have become an inseparable part of my life. Chanting of Veda Mantras, the habit of saving, and detachment to worldly illusions are some of the life changing teachings of Bal Vikas that have a deep impact in

shaping my personality. Bal Vikas has also taught me to be punctual, to do things with perfection, to be firm in all decisions and to have a synchronization of thought, speech and action. Taking part in Bal Vikas activities helped me achieve confidence and positivity. As I entered my college life, I attended Pre Seva Dal Class and served as a Bal Vikas Guru. In the year 1982, my respected Bal Vikas Guru, took Pre Seva Dal students to a Spiritual Camp (Winter Course) at Delhi for which I also got an opportunity to attend. Those 10 days of learning gave me life changing and life transforming lessons. We attained immense knowledge of various topics including Veda Mantras, Bhajgovindam, Ramayana, Geeta. All of us have heard of the Gurukul System. Bal Vikas and Pre Seva Dal is Gurukul for me. It is all because of the blessings of the Divine. The blessings of Bhagawan Baba helped me complete my Masters in Economics and achieve a Gold Medal in Yoga Diploma. Sai Family became my life and since the year 1978 I am actively participating in all Sathya Sai Organization activities.

I got married in the year 1990 and life was smooth until my husband got ill and eventually passed away in the year 2002 leaving behind two small kids. I was quite worried about my two children and their education. Everything was in a chaos around me at that time and it seemed like it was an end for me. It was the hardest phase of my life. All situations kept on worsening and I kept on crying. One day in front of Bhagawan's photo I prayed to Him from the deep core of my heart to give me the courage and strength to execute all responsibilities. Within a few seconds felt as if Swami had come and entered in me and gave me all the



*Each child is a white marble for the teacher,
The parents to mould into an image of God,
A bud to be helped to blossom in all its Divine glory
So that it becomes a worthy offering to God.*

strength to fight my circumstances. This was the time when I could feel the divinity of Bhagawan all around me. After that day things changed as if I was never ever tense or depressed.

It was like all my anxiety vanished and my perception of life changed. I felt the power, confidence and strength from within. I felt like I had been blessed with the working capacity of ten people. Only One thing comes to my mind when I think of any problem – 'Follow the master, Face the devil, fight till the end and finish the game'. From that very day with the grace of Swami I have never looked back and always leaped forward having faith in the Divine. I received the blessings and support of the Divine when I needed them the most. With faith in divine I put my tireless efforts in opening a primary school based upon the teaching and principles of Swami. HE gave me wisdom to sort out legal problems, to raise up my own house and to establish a School, Computer Centre and Nursery Teacher Training Institute as well. With

the grace of Baba I even made it sure to get my sons the best possible education and Bhagawan helped both of them to complete Engineering from good Engineering Colleges.

In 2013, I was awarded with Excellence Award from Himachal Pradesh and I feel that the love bestowed on us by his divinity is the utmost pleasure and satisfaction one can get in his life. Bhagawan, by letting and getting me through all the hardships in my life ultimately gave me an opportunity to truly experience the grace of his divinity. With His grace, I have got the chance to serve as a state Bal Vikas Coordinator, a path where I could pursue my passion of teaching with selfless service. To bag all the grace which comes through good deeds, an important sobriquet of Sai Parivar 'Love all serve all' has for very long deep resided in my conscious and I will always yearn to bag this grace I am able to serve this mankind by any means.



Bhairi Sai Vallika
Jharkhand

"Children's minds are innocent and pure. Each child is like white marble for the teacher and the parents to sculpt into an image of God, a bud to be helped to blossom in all its Divine glory so that it becomes a worthy offering to God. Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas, has proved to be the ray of hope for the future as it promotes that each child is unique, unrepeatable and creative being and when treated as such, learns to recognize his or her own worth and give respect to all."

Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Pioneered by Thy Master Himself, the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas true to its meaning, has and is still miraculously paving way for the holistic development of the lives of His children worldwide. These 50 years not only transformed lives of millions but were like a home for every path wavering stranger. The unconditional love and grace of our beloved Sai Maa and the pillars of Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema and Ahimsa always protected us from the gusty winds of life.

Swami says, "Education should build character. Education without character is not only useless, but also positively dangerous." From the enrapturing stories to mesmerizing bhajan sessions to the eye opening teachings of sarvadharm to the importance of selfless service, our mother like compassionate, caring and loving Balvikas Gurus left no stone unturned in order to nurture us - the buds waiting to bloom into beautiful flowers to be offered to and loved by Swami. To prevent us from becoming a knife that is sharp on one side with education but is blunt on the other side without character, our Gurus injected into us values and

virtues from the very start, thus molding young and impressionable minds into strong trees with roots of education and fruits of virtue. When stuck amidst the violent storm in the sea of life struggling to get ashore, the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas has always been a lighthouse for us. The simple yet effective teachings of Swami like, "Love All Serve All" and "Watch Your W- Words, A-Actions, T-Thoughts, C-Character, H-Heart" have always acted as a protective shield and also as a key to true and eternal happiness for all of us.

We are all grateful and blessed that the Master has chosen us to be the torchbearers of this divine mission enlightening both, our souls and the society at large. With the divine grace Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas has completed its 51 glorious years but still has a long and untrodden path to discover. We, the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas family- the Gurus, the Students and the Alumni have the golden opportunity to serve Swami by shouldering this important day to day responsibility and not let the flame of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas lit by Bhagawan Himself die out but to lighten the heart of every child so as to strive collectively for Blossoming of Human Excellence.



Padma Krishnan
Karnataka

HIS MASTERSTROKE

"Human Values are inherent. When provided a stimulus and encouraged, they will naturally sprout..."

During my school days, in a class of forty students, few mischief mongers exceeded their limits. This resulted in the whole class being punished. I was a part of this class and we silently rejoiced over the fact that the teachers could not break our unity and identify the culprits. It even gave us a sense of oneness!

Years later, life took me in its flow and put me back in a similar situation! Ironically this time I was on the other side of the class as a Balvikas guru! I was shocked and was out of wits to handle this. It was disappointing to hear untruth in the class where Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi, Prema and Ahimsa were painstakingly preached. A sense of dismay filled and choked me when I began to think that all that I had done, had gone down the drain. It was difficult to swallow this, and I looked up to Bhagawan. There were too many questions in my head and I badly needed HIS intervention to handle this.

When the 'I' is outwitted, 'HE' steps in.

My reaction-less blank face created an uncomfortable silence which stirred the children to respond. One child, first stepped up and said "Sorry". The others followed in quick succession, and before I realised, there was a unified voice saying "Sorry", loudly and clearly. That moment is etched within and I can never forget the feeling when Truth prevailed over petty pleasures!

Today I realise that every single balvikas class has

such a moment - The moment when the 'I' steps aside. This is the moment when 'HE' silently steps in to take over and give a masterstroke that is apt for each one of us! Out of HIS immense love, He chooses us as instruments to wield 99 strokes, so that HE wields that 100th masterstroke which shatters the rock. HIS masterstroke reveals THAT which is within!

The journey of Balvikas has taught me more than what I tried to teach the kids!

Be blind to get a better insight!

Be deaf to hear HIS voice!

Be dumb to grasp HIS message, and

Be silent to know yourself!

I treat my balvikas classes as my personal one-to-one sessions with Swami! They help me reflect and charge me for the coming week. I may teach the same syllabus, yet I discover a new dimension of understanding every time. It's as exciting journey with every batch and is a sadhana close to my heart. Balvikas has been a way of life for more than two decades now and it's a joy to reminisce the MASTERSTROKE moments!

The transformative experiences of Gurus and children for the last 50 years around the globe is undoubtedly heralding the **Golden Age!** Dear Swami, I pray that many more generations of students and gurus become Divine instruments in your noble mission!

Thank You Swami! JAI Sairam!



Kaushik M
Kerala

I feel privileged to share my experiences and views regarding my Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas classes. My mind jogs back to my childhood days when at the tender age of three, I was introduced to Balvikas classes. I was fascinated by the enthralling way my Guru narrated stories, sang songs and enacted plays.

My interest in Sri Sathya Sai balvikas deepened as I grew older. I would never skip any of my classes and in my ninth standard I completed my Group II exam. The habit of going within and thinking deep was thus instilled in me at a very young age.

When I was in my 8th grade, I attended a Balvikas camp in 'Panmana Ashram' of the Saint Sri Chattampi Swamikal in Kollam. There we had a session conducted by a Psychiatrist on teen problems. He suddenly put forwarded a question to me 'Are you satisfied with your life?'

I replied 'Yes'.

He asked whether I was the topper in all subjects? I honestly replied that I was not, as I only came among top 5 students, He asked me 'Don't you wish to become the topper?'

I immediately replied, 'No, because Swami has told us **"Care more for remarks than marks"**. The answer stumped the psychiatrist and made him realize that Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas children were one of a kind and not to be bracketed with ordinary children he was used to addressing.

Day after day, classes became more and more attractive. But it was only when studying for my

Group-III that I realized the true import of what Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas meant. I understood that it meant blossoming of a child's personality and that its aim was to foster character development and inculcate spiritual transformation and self-respect in students like me.

"Balvikas is Bhava Vikas thereby leads to Mano Vikas and eternally to Lokavikas"

It was only after my Group-III exams that I began to fully implement the life lessons I had imbibed from subjects like Management of Thought Breath and Time, Habits of Saving, Ideal Sevak etc. The pressure of studies, tuitions, assignments etc. were bogging me down so much that I couldn't handle the pressure and my scores dropped dramatically. It was then that I turned to my Balvikas lessons as the last resort. I started waking up early in the morning spending 15 minutes in chanting Omkara (21 times) , **Suprabhatham** and doing **Jyothi meditation** for 15 minutes. It merely took half an hour but combined with one hour of studies daily it worked wonders and I realized that there was a phenomenal growth in my marks. I thanked Swami for showing me the right path.

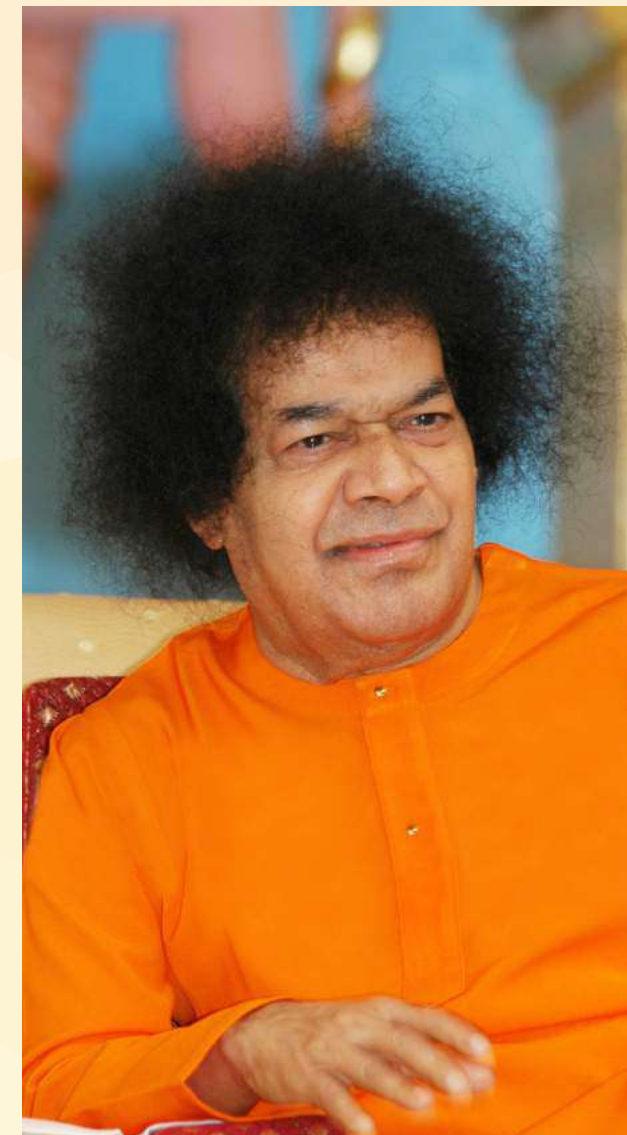
Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas has had a tremendous impact on my life. From a shy kid, I got transformed into a self-confident one with leadership quality. I urge all the parents across the globe to bless their children with this unique gift of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas. I thank Swami for making me a part of this wonderful education system and I dedicate all my achievements at His lotus feet. With sincere thanks to my Balvikas Gurus, I pray for the welfare of all **"SAMASTHA LOKAH SUKINO BHAVANTHU"**



Dr Surabhi Awasthy
Madha Pradesh

Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas has been, the very source which silently inculcated in me the values of great worth, in today's world of advancement. Being a Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Alumnus, I realized years after, that these were not only aiding my spiritual progress but also helped me in the dealings of the worldly affairs, where we pursue our career and the society, we live in. These 9 years, are the years of metamorphosis that we undergo, transforming beautifully from a caterpillar to a butterfly unfolding in the diverse hues of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Non-violence and Love. Seldom, do we realize at that tender age, the deep foundation of strong values that is being laid so subtly, merrily, playing, performing and laughing with our Guru. Reminiscing, it was these little teachings, that gave me the courage to stand for the truth, strong will power, the self-confidence and the knowledge of self-correction which are of inexplicable worth today. Ceiling on desires, ability to discriminate between right and wrong, humility and the importance of purity in character were the basics that we followed involuntarily. A mere change in the perception developed through Bal Vikas, now brings such simple solutions to the worldly complexities. The most precious boon of Bal Vikas to me was the 'Faith in the Divine – Lord Sri Sathya Sai Baba', who is my strength and my confidence today. This whole life has now become a Bal Vikas class, where we are being guided to reach the ultimate goal, to become ego-less and hollow like a flute, letting God blow through us his divine melody and let us serve as his perfect instruments in the society. I wonder so many others are lovingly blessed like me, to relish and dive

deep in the divine, in these 50 years of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas and how many more are yet to be! I am extremely grateful to my respected Bal Vikas Guru to show me the path to our most beloved Lord Sri Sathya Sai Baba whose unbounded love is the undercurrent of my life and continuing to be so..





Sampada Virulkar
Madhya Pradesh

Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas as the name indicates is a Movement launched by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to blossom the today's children to citizens and leaders of tomorrow. This movement was founded in the year 1969 and has grown into an international movement under the auspices of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations.

Balvikas in fact is a Sanskrit phrase which means – blossoming of child and its aim is to foster character development and inculcate spiritual transformation and at the same time, it also inculcates self respect in the students I have been associated with Balvikas right from the childhood and it did start from the divine classes of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas.

I cherish those good old childhood days when my mother used to take me to Balvikas classes on a weekend as she is also a Balvikas Guru. I never imagined that all five techniques like prayer, group singing, group activities, story-telling and silent sitting would have a profound effect on me.

As a school child, I overcame the stage fear and in return I won the appreciation of all my teachers. I realized that Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas had slowly transformed me.

In the year 2004, I got the golden opportunity to be a part of dance-drama named-'Madhura Bhakti' presented by Balvikas students of MP&CG in front of our beloved Swami. After the performance, some of us were privileged to have a conversation with swami and with so much of love swami asked my name and after I answered, swami said, "good name, good girl". Those golden words have always motivated me to

keep up to the title which Bhagawan gave me.

Swami blessed me with the opportunity to study in His holy institute Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning- Anantapur in the year 2013. My stay at Swami's institute was very fruitful because of the strong base of Balvikas. Balvikas has taught me to handle my failure and victory with equipoise. It has taught me to push myself to do better in all aspects and to give my best and put all my efforts in what I do and leave the results to Swami.

As a Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas student, I promise to spread Swami's message and I pray to Swami to be with me always.



Saieswari Natesan
Maharashtra

Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas means a "ray of hope" and a "concrete foundation" for me. My Balvikas classes began right from home when I was a toddler and my parents were my first gurus. Since then it holds a special place in my heart. I realized the true importance of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas only when I entered college and suddenly there was this freedom where you are free to do whatever you want and to go wherever you wish to go. Where all my classmates and friends indulged in drinking, smoking and drugs, the values taught to me through Balvikas kept me rooted to my principles. And it continues to do so even today when I am working in a corporate environment filled with such atmosphere.

The values inculcated through various and rigorous coursework of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas continues to stand by me day in and out helping me make the right choices and stay focused on the true destination where I yearn to reach, "GOD". I truly believe in today's world where the western culture has sunk into the roots of our society and youth are making groundless decisions to ruin their lives, Balvikas can be a ray of hope for the little buds that have begun their journey to bloom and will soon be the youth force of the world.

With Swami's blessings and divine will, I have got an opportunity to give back what I have learnt, by being a Balvikas guru. In recent times, I came across a question, "Spirituality and devotion can be done after retirement when we have lots of free time, then why to begin now or from childhood?" In answer to this I recall Swami's discourses, wherein he emphasized that values need to be inculcated in one's formative years. Just like a pot can be given a proper shape only when the clay is wet and not when it is dried for many years in the scorching sunlight. The same applies to values and spirituality- it has to sink deep into our action right from a young age and become a part of our character all over the years.

I believe 50 years is one milestone we have crossed, but as an alumnus of this divine mission we need to be the torch bearers and carry this legacy forward. I have heard several times from Swami and my gurus that education is important but value-based education is crucial and is a must for every child. It is my earnest wish to see the day when every school across the world include Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas in their curriculum and take serious and united efforts to make their students better citizens of the globe. My obeisance to the Lotus feet of the Lord to give all of us the energy, path and direction to carry forward His divine mission and be His instrument in this beautiful journey.



Dr Shrunkhala M Kaushik
Maharashtra

My most humble pranams at the Divine Lotus Feet of our most beloved lord Sai, who is verily my life breath and the reason for my existence!!

50 years is a very significant statistical figure! 50 years mark, but the fruition of the gigantic mission of love, which our most merciful Lord himself took up and has been nourishing all these years with his divya sankalpas, to only raise students like me to become human. He himself chose each and every Balvikas kid one by one and made it not a program but a mammoth movement!

“THE SRI SATHYASAI BALVIKAS MOVEMENT” indeed.

My journey started as a 7-year-old attending balvikas only for the sake of getting chocolates at the end of our Balvikas session. For me it was nothing but the taste of those chocolates which kept me glued to Balvikas.

Time flew and I found myself appearing for group II exams and that too after great deliberations from my Balvikas guru; but this was extremely mechanical back then. I treated it just like another school exam and fortunately cleared it too.

Days passed by and one fine day, while I was studying in std 8th. I had this unavoidable urge to know Bhagawan. I thought to myself they say I am a good and disciplined balvikas student but what is Balvikas all about?? What does Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba want to convey to the world with it? I attend Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas but do I even know and follow His teachings?”

I didn't know where this thought came from, but it gave me my 'moment for life'...! My mind started contemplating on it. Day in and day out my heart was

at unrest until I found myself reading one of the 'Sanathana Sarathi' magazines, which my Balvikas Guru had suggested my mother to subscribe to. And ever since, the depth of my connect with Swami has been unfathomable. Nothing else gives me as much joy as getting connected with him. Be it through singing the 5 Sai bhajans every day, or reading Sai literature, or writing a letter to him or even through serving a patient at a Sri Sathya Sai Medical camp.

It will be very apt to mention at this juncture that Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas not only satiated my hunger for chocolates but also satiated my spiritual hunger. Years passed by and by His divine grace, I completed my Balvikas group III .

Meanwhile, I got immensely attached to Swami. So much so that at the age of 19, I found myself in the shoes of a Balvikas Guru. The circumstances were such that my balvikas guru had to shift abroad; and at the same time she did not want the balvikas in our colony to stop.

Today when I look back, I can say Swami chose me as his instrument and against all the odds of medical education from UG to PG helped me to take Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas, secure a University rank in academics and was with me throughout in all walks of life. Now the situation is such that, no chocolate interests me as much as the divine Sai chocolate. Such is the mantra of transformation of our divine alchemist and I just cannot thank him enough!!

Myriads of miracles happening every single moment only get me closer to him. Now I seek nothing but Him alone. I'm extremely grateful to Bhagawan for making me a part of his most divine and timeless Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas movement. In all my capacity I pray to stay glued to His divine lotus feet.



Thoudam Rama Devi
Manipur

It was when I was in Class IV that I met Mabok Chandrasakhi whom we simply knew as 'Sai Ram'. After listening to the story of Our Dearest Swami, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, from *mabok Sai Ram*, I developed a strong desire for worshipping Swami with all my heart and soul. I have an inclination for worshipping God from my early childhood. No wonder! listening to the amazing miracles of Bhagawan Baba heightened my yearning to devote myself to God even more. My siblings and cousins too joined me in attending SSSBV classes after I shared the stories narrated by my Bal Vikas Guru, *mabok Sai Ram*. Visiting *mabok* Chandrasakhi's house on Sundays became a regular feature for all of us because of the heart-touching value-based stories, epic stories of sacrifice and heroism, of great men and women and above all, the value games. I began worshipping Swami at home from that very day. I received a beautiful picture of Swami from my Bal Vikas Guru. We also learned many beautiful bhajans in our Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas classes.

One of the most remarkable things I would love to mention is the genuine platform given by SSSBV programme where all the Bal Vikas students can participate and showcase their hidden talents. We also participated in various dance performances and bhajans during functions venerating Swami. This is truly what Swami calls “Educare” i.e. to bring out from within. We also started taking part in several activities organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Manipur. The teachings of Swami have made it amply clear that keeping ourselves neat and clean is of great

importance. Above all, cleansing of mind through Japa and Dhyana is a must if we are treading on the spiritual path. He has also revealed the beautiful bond between humans and God. HE has also ignited the lamp of love by showing us the path of worshipping God through selfless service with a pure conscience. Swami has also enabled us to make a clear distinction between formal education based on bookish knowledge and the spiritual education which is the real education that helps us to know who we are and to manifest the Divinity latent in all of us.

The Chosen Gurus of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas – for over 50 years have been rendering this unique value-based education initiated by Our dearest Swami for transforming self to transform the world. Swami's Divine Message “LOVE All, SERVE All! HELP EVER, HURT NEVER!” also revealed that a human being berefts of any compassion or without any respect for others will never know God and never lead a peaceful life. In our Bal Vikas classes, our Gurus helped us understand the basic qualities necessary to lead an ideal life. We have been taught that the highest state of bliss can be attained only with a pure heart. Let me conclude with one of Swami's GEMS “An act, dedicated to God will produce greater results than one not so dedicated”.



Shivakumar Kannan
Mumbai Metro Region

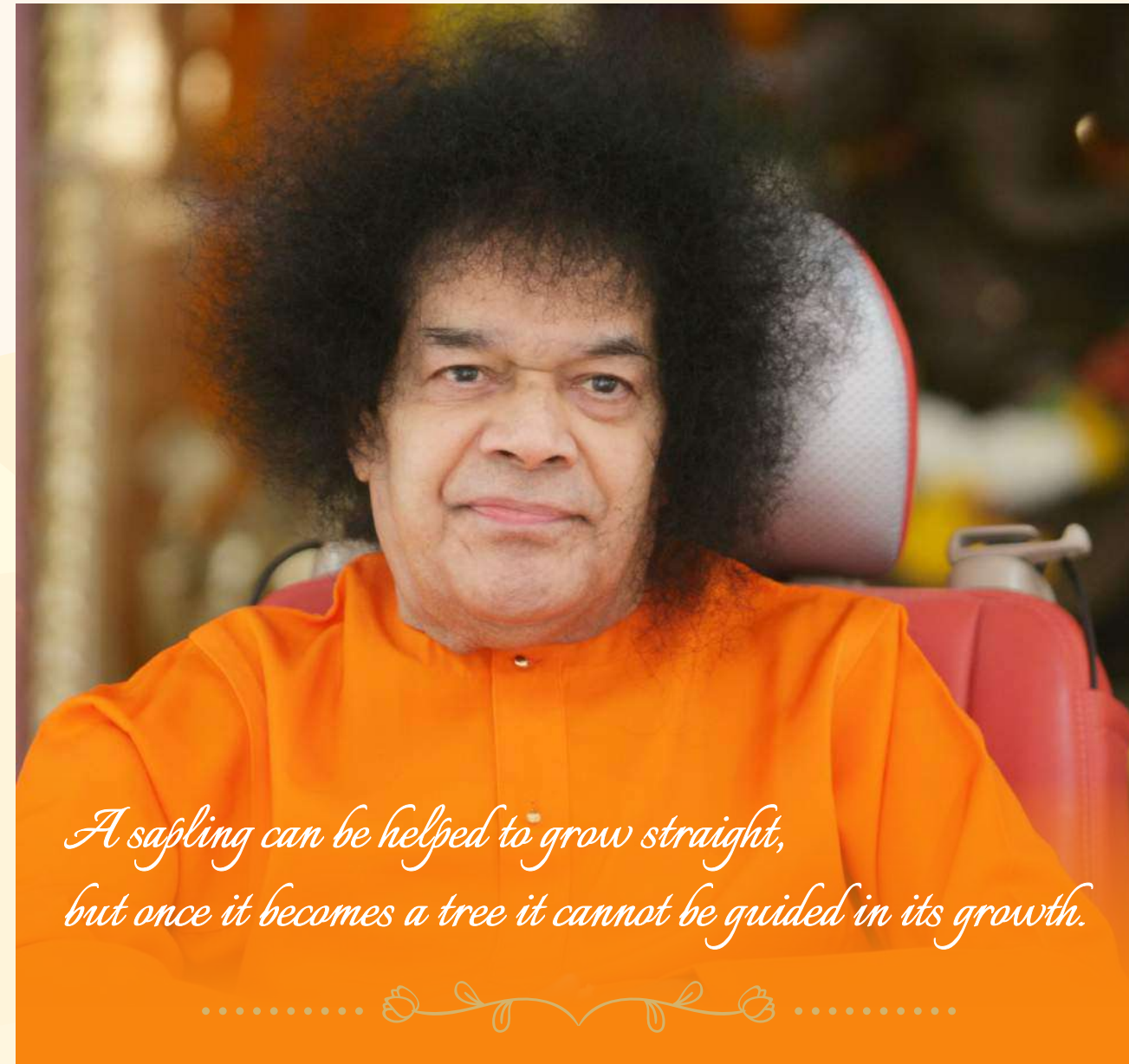
“That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind” were the first few words by Neil Armstrong, the first man to set foot on the Moon way back in 1969. That was a landmark moment in history for it not only demonstrated the distance science could take us to but also set the stage for rapid scientific breakthroughs and technological advancement over the course of the next five decades that followed. Since then, man's intellectual capabilities have encouraged him to blur geographical boundaries and transcend archaic imaginations. From color televisions to satellite cable TV, from personal computers to internet proliferation, from pagers to smartphones; our world has seen waves of paradigm shifts which virtually dismantled every shackle people were once bound by. However, what has also been observed of society at large during this time makes for a sorry commentary quite contrary to what economic development should have helped achieve. While on the one hand, the whole world has become one large family, erstwhile joint families have begun disintegrating into nuclear ones, divorce rates and teenage pregnancies have seen a spike, jealousy and discontentment has become commonplace, and despite living in a hyperconnected world, youngsters often find themselves disconnected and lonely.

It's probably this very foresight that the Lord envisioned and initiated the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas program (originally named Balvihar) in the same year when man first set foot on the moon - 1969. At a time when most commercial organisations globally, have been unable to sustainably thrive over long periods of time, the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas - a completely non-

commercial, voluntary program has completed fifty golden years with lakhs of students world-over having passed out as beneficiaries. This noble movement started by the Avatar of this age, Himself, has today grown into a social revolution of sorts. Not only does it transform the lives of these children but also creates a lasting positive impact on their families and the societies that they live in. While most educational institutions dole out certificates of degrees in literacy, they do precious little to eradicate moral poverty. Which is why Baba would often say, “Education is for life and not merely for a living”.

The longevity of anything is dependent on its innate ability to sustainably remain relevant despite all the changes that come with time. The fact that the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas program continues to grow in strength even after five decades is testimony to its foundation which is based on Baba's exhortation that “The End of Education is Character”.

As children, we're all like a dry sponge, thirsting for every ounce of learning that comes our way and at that impressionable age every bit of positivity can do wonders for a lifetime. My wife and I, both, being beneficiaries of this transformational program during our respective growing up years can vouch for its impact as we've experienced it ourselves. Not only did we develop the self-confidence to stand our ground on many occasions in the face of peer pressures during our vulnerable adolescent years but instead also became a positive influence on our peers around. Credibility and respect have become our badges of honor in our social circles.



*A sapling can be helped to grow straight,
but once it becomes a tree it cannot be guided in its growth.*

One of our most indelible experiences was during our four-year stint in Bangalore recently. My wife and I would conduct Balvikas classes in our house for the children of our locality. Our landlord was quietly skeptical about the whole goings on but continued to observe us with a keen eye. She watched in bewilderment how, unlike most other couples our age who would spend much of their weekends, 'enjoying life', the two of us not only conducted Balvikas classes regularly but would also rather strangely and yet happily undertake a tiring, four hours travel into a village to train kids of a rural school in dramatics! Curiosity probably isn't such a bad thing after all; for it prompted her to follow us closely.

Over the course of the next couple of years, she was very intrigued about what motivates us to lead our lives the way we did. She'd also found that the two of us were very unconventional. We came across to her to be very emotionally balanced as individuals and our positive outlook towards life amazed her. Towards the end of our stay in Bangalore, she was so drawn to our way of life that she herself got both her sons enrolled into our Balvikas class and wanted them to benefit from it the way she perceived we did too. For us, this was a very satisfying experience as it gave us the belief that we are living up to our master's dictum, “Your life is my message”.



Sai Prasad Patnaik
Odisha

THE MIRACLE AND BLESSING OF BEING A SRI SATHYA SAI BAL VIKAS STUDENT

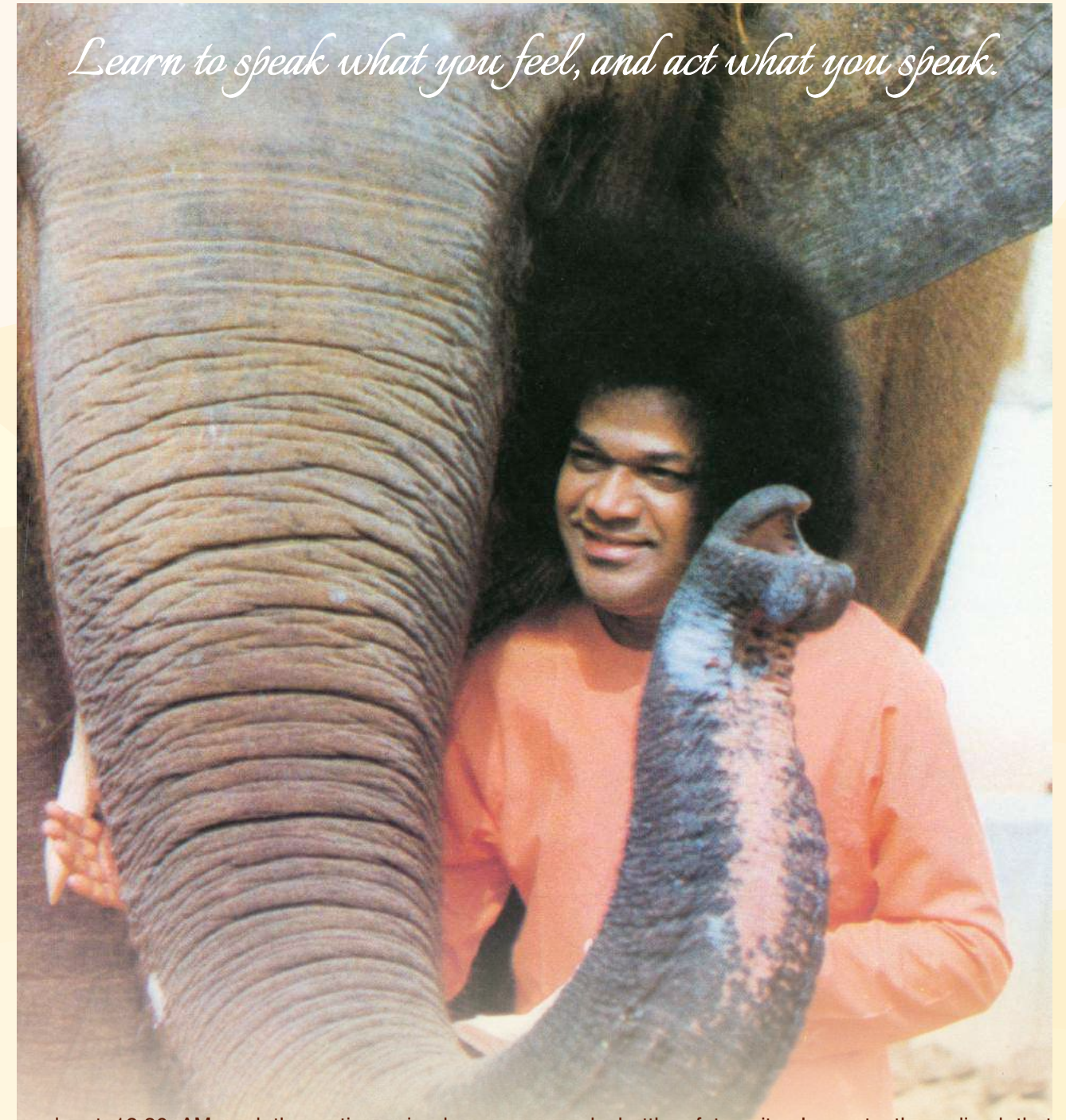
Swami's Birthday – the event for which I used to wait eagerly as a Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas child, a teenager and a Sai Youth. After the whole night of participation during Birthday decorations, followed by Nagar Sankirtan I had to go to school. The 23rd of November reminds me of the excitement of the short and swift run after returning from school bus to our Matkambada Samithi. I remained excited to reach early and sit in front of Swami in the grand celebrations. To reap such experiences, my hunger continues for the entire year. It is Swami's blessing in disguise, where we get a chance to participate in the huge crowd for the Narayan Seva, where we offer service by distributing salt, water, clothes. The birthday celebrations give us an intermittent break when we have a nutritious and sumptuous lunch as Prasadam in the loving company of Samithi uncles and aunties. Again during, the evening Cultural programme and Satsang, become all the more engrossing. The soul gets the solace that it deserves.

Life finds peace like the comfort of lotus petals only when the mind settles at the divine lotus feet. Inexplicable is our transformation when He captures our mind and guides us. As a Group-2 Bal Vikas student my understanding of Swami's influence on me was not much. My coming to Bal Vikas was one of His divine plans. Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas went on sowing seeds of humanity in the course of the innumerable activities we were put to, from attending the classes to participating in Bal Vikas Rallies, competitions and so on. But the seeds were silently sown in my heart only to germinate during the several

walks of life's career. In these four decades, the growing tree of Sai Values and His divine soul only brightened shades of my life. Sathya Sai as the beholder of my senses, faculties, physical and mental, shaped me into a sensible person.

'Growing up' is obvious in case of a biological being – 'Growing on and Going on' however, are optional and voluntary choices that a man makes. And, we are the results of the choices we make. Every child is growing up to become young, further into the adulthood passing through the waves of changes in social, educational and professional institutions. He is exposed to new family members, colleagues, friend circles at every step of life. I grew and am growing up with little difference. It was only Bal Vikas, that could supply the necessary oil for this divine light to keep glowing in me and pave my way in the darkness during my journey.

Numerous are the incidents in these four decades after Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas which always stated and inculcated the feeling within me that Swami is holding my hands. One such occasion was during His last physical sojourn to Shimla. I hardly had any money to spend on this occasion of His advent in Shimla. However, I took a loan of a sum of 50,000 rupees to be spent during this period. Actually I was actively involved for 90 days across various responsibilities. Money was a dire necessity to be spent to bring my parents from Chennai - Madurai - New Delhi- Shimla and they were to come with the Padukas which the Lord would bless. The call to get the Padukas was



made at 12:30 AM and the entire episode was concluded by His divine Grace before 9:00 AM sharp. These eight and half hours were spent on ticketing, journey, picking the Padukas from Madurai and climbing uphill while the divine convoy passed amidst 5 lakh devotees at Pujarli in Shimla. Responsibility was bestowed upon me to escort the students of Swami from Chandigarh to Shimla in these eight and half hours. For an individual of flesh and blood; the task was mammoth, gigantic and herculean – name it with any adjective as you may like. During the rush

and shuttle of transits, I constantly realised that Swami Himself was getting everything done as I was one of His beloved Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas students. That was one of numerous instances to quote as His Divine Miracle for a Bal Vikas student. I felt proud of my grooming as a Bal Vikas student.

My life is continuing and I shall remain always His Bal Vikas Student to be some day merged at His Divine Lotus Feet in eternal bliss.

Prayers for Your grace Swami



Sainirakar Sahoo
Odisha

THREE LOTUSES IN THE POOL...AND, MILLIONS EVERYWHERE

A soul comes to the world as a child born divine. However, the influence of the world, are sometimes potent enough to adulterate the human mind. I belong to Cuttack, the millennium city of Odisha. Like, every old city, this city has also its problems. The place where I live is such an area where the common man is forced by the society put into daily grinds so much so that no energy is left for education, and moral upliftment is a distant goal for parents. I always noticed from childhood that many people in our society had disturbed lives.

Lucky are those, who are born and grow in the fold of God. I was yet to realise it. I belong to a business family where my mother firmly believes in God and on the other hand my father who believes in nothing other than 'Work is God'. We are four siblings. My elder sister, after graduation, got married in a blessed family and is now a homemaker. I and my brother are twins and there is also one younger brother. During our childhood, when we might have been four or five years old, respected elder brother Bhabasis Das(Lulu Bhai) came to live in a house just next to our home. Daily at exactly 5:30pm, Bhajan was conducted at his place. We, all kids used to go there because at the end of the Bhajan session prasad would be distributed. Then slowly we started attending Balvikas every Sunday. Gradually we became so much attached to Balvikas that we could not live a Sunday without it. In the evening, when other children used to play, we used to attend Bhajans daily without fail. At that time, in our locality, hardly there would be any child whoever succeeded in studies. Maximum

numbers of children were under matriculates. My grandparents and their ancestors also did never complete matriculation. But, with Swami's Grace and blessings of our parents, we all four did well in our studies. My twin brother became a Doctor in Indian Army. I became an Engineer and my younger brother became a Chartered Accountant. It was all possible only as a result of the blessings of Bhagawan.

Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas not only changed our childhood experiences but also became an integral part of our lives by infusing greater human values of excellence in a silent and sublime manner. The grace of Swami through Balvikas made us believe that we could be the lotuses despite the slur and silt in a pool. Wherever we moved in our lives, we always felt that Swami is with us at every step.

We have never left SAI organisation even if we are far off from home. When I studied engineering at Burla, I was also part of the SAI organisation there. I became the Secretary of Social Service Group of our College. We organised many social events like blood donation camps and health awareness centers there. We formed a group of volunteers and gave free education to students in a nearby village called Kirba. The students there were very slow and backward in their studies, but now, after so many years, that free education initiative is still continuing and many students are scoring more than 80% also. SAI blessed us with the continuous efforts of engineering students who gave time and patience for this. My brother Niranjana, who studied MBBS in AFMC Pune followed



a similar path. He too was part of Sai Organisation Pune and became Youth Coordinator there. He also did many social activities in old age homes and orphanage named as "Sai Prayaas". As a doctor he attended numerous medical camps in remote villages also. He would join a medical camp whenever he happens to be in Odisha. My younger brother Biswanath, who studied CA in Chennai also became a part of the Sai Organisation, Chennai. He takes part in village programs and social activities there.

I am now a Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas Guru, Youth member and Alumni of Cuttack Samithi.

Nevertheless, to say that Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas is now embedded in our DNA and it makes us what we are. In our culture and our upbringing, Balvikas acts as a catalyst to bring out the goodness of an individual and transform that into greatness. A person is handsome by his character, not by his position nor the physical appearance. We are taught in Balvikas about how we could become not only successful in our professional lives but also how we could have a personal life of total contentment.

A BIG THANK YOU to SWAMI to be a part of our life and make us to be a part of the Sai Family.

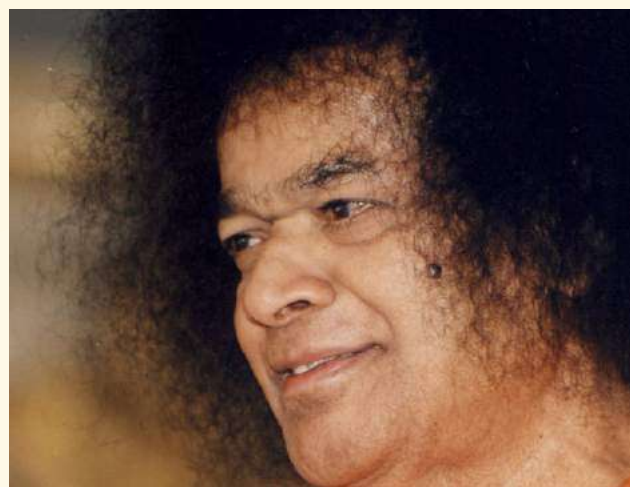


Lavanya
Punjab

My humble pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. 'Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas', for me is an astonishing journey, it still is and will always be. So it will always have a remarkable impact on my life. My experience as a Sri Sathya Sai balvikas student in past 11 years was an amalgamation of learning lots and lots of divine verses, Vedas, shlokas, merriment of performing in Balvikas functions and playing amusing games. Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas class felt like home. I made lot of friends; we enjoyed but simultaneously learned many values and habits to be a right-minded person. Those lessons can never be forgotten, those friends and teachers can never be replaced and those memories will never fade. It's been eleven years, yet it does not seem to be so long. Being a balvikas student, I always felt the vibes around me that Swami's grace was always upon me. Whenever there was any type of difficulty, I just remembered the words of my Balvikas teacher "Swami has a reason for your struggle." I just prayed whole heartedly to Baba and what it felt to me was like a miracle. Swami was always there to rescue. The innumerable love which I got in balvikas cannot be equalized with any other place. As children, we always expect prasadam which our balvikas guru always distributed at the end of the session. This was also a reason for many students getting attracted towards this class including myself and now I think that this expectation and attraction was worth a lot. The participations in Balvikas functions removed my stage fears. It helped to prepare and face other stages like school or any private institution. I wonder if I was not a balvikas student how would I have been

shaped. To be a Sri Sathya Sai balvikas student in itself is a big miracle for me. The amusing games which we played in Sri Sathya Sai balvikas were not just only a fun game to entertain ourselves but it had deep lessons which at that time we did not realize but with my growing age these helped me to take decisions and be what I am. When it comes to the 50 years celebration of Balvikas, I feel since it is Satya Sai Balvikas, there are endless such 50 years awaiting for the future generation to merge in Sai's thought and make the world 'SAI MAYAM' till the earth breathes it's last. There will be many Sai devotees and Balvikas students who at some point of the time in their life will be going to share their service at Sai's will.

Before I end I would like to say that my Balvikas guru is my mother. So I have been very lucky to have my mentor always at my disposal as Swami is always at my back to support & strengthen me as Swami always says " If every mother is a balvikas guru then there need not be a special teacher as a balvikas guru."

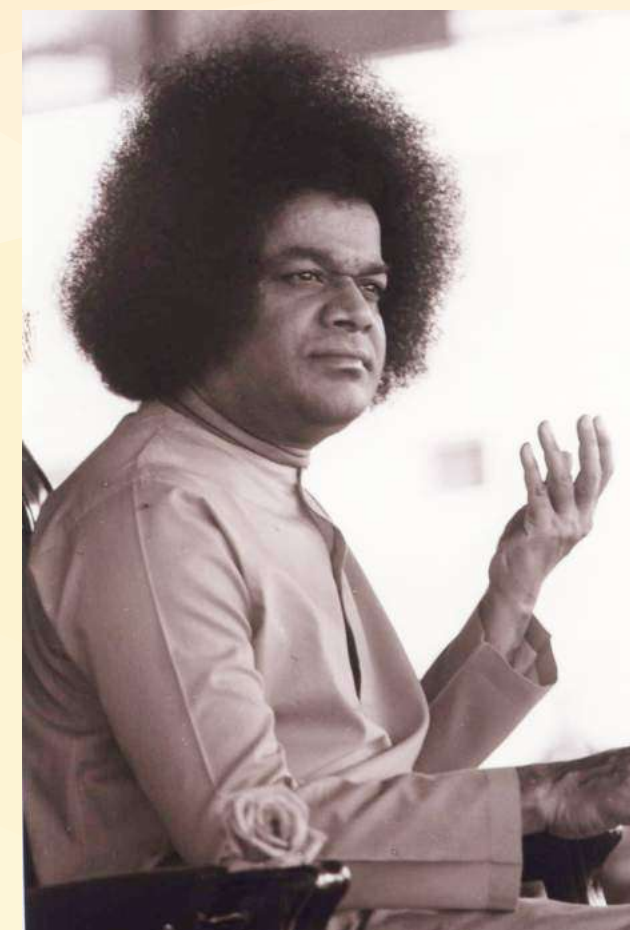


Pratik Nikhade
Rajasthan

I am Pratik Nikhade currently doing my B. Tech in Chennai and a 4th year engineering student. I would like to thank Swami for giving me this opportunity to write about my experience. I completed my Balvikas class and I would like to share a small experience which happened with me when I went to give an interview in my 7th semester. I applied for a campus IT company's job profile and the interviewer asked me about myself and all other basic questions, which are generally asked in the interview process. Further the interviewer asked me - what other extracurricular activities I am doing. I replied I play sports and listen to music and read books. But the interviewer was not impressed so the interviewer asked me "tell me other than this, what extra things do you do", so I replied that my parents are part of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations and we are devotee of Swami. I was a Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas class student in which I was taught Bhajans, Vedas, Meditation. I know bhajans and often listen to them when I am feeling low and they help me to motivate and focus. I sometimes attend Sundaram bhajans (Chennai).

I further told the interviewer that before joining college I would go for Narayan Seva and help in Samiti's work. I also worked as a volunteer whenever I got a chance to contribute to Samiti's work. I would help in blood donation camps or go to gramseva whenever I got chance. The interviewer was seemingly interested, and I completed my interview. After a week the results were announced, and I was selected for that job profile.

Because Of Swami and His blessings, I got this job. Balvikas class has taught me moral values. It has helped me to get selected. I would also like to thank my Balvikas gurus for their support, motivation and for teaching us so many good things which are not taught everywhere. Sathya Sai Balvikas class taught me patience and how to improve myself and respect the elders. . Sri Satya Sai Balvikas is completing 50 years and I feel so lucky and blessed to be a part of this journey and spread Swami's message of Sathya. Dharma, Shanti, Prema and Ahimsa.





Tanvi Khanna
Rajasthan

For global transformation. the divine master Sri Sathya Sai Baba has chosen Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas as an important tool. Baba always said Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas will lead to Lok Vikas. Swami says the children's mind are innocent and pure. the child is like white marble for the teacher and the parent to sculpt into an image of God, like a bud to be helped to blossom in all its divine Glory. He also says, your classes are named Bal Vikas, meaning blossoming of the bud to a flower. Every child is a flower in the garden of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas, which has been a loving catalyst in the development of personalities.

What is all Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas about? What is the aim of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas? What are we expecting out of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas? Bal Vikas means – blossoming of a child and its aim is to foster character development and inculcate spiritual transformation and at the same time, it also inculcates self-respect in students like me.

Love all, serve all is Swami's important teachings. All the learnings that I have gathered in Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas classes has in fact been fruitful when I grew old and I had lot of challenges to face – whether in the educational career, like choosing the right college for my education , or commencement of professional career . Swami helped me with all.

What do we aspire in life? What do you want to become? What expectations do we have from Life? A good career, decent job, stability in life? I think yes. Everyone would at least aspire for these three things

and trust me all these things can be received through Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas

Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas overall has left its impact in my life and I am proud to be a part of such a wonderful education movement laid down by Swami which has got so many things to offer at no cost.

Human values can neither be inculcated through textbooks nor can they be gifted by anyone. They are inherent with each individual and the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas program provides the right environment for these latent human values to blossom and empower each child to unfold the innate values within oneself to the highest perfection. In fact, Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas compliments the school education emphasizing on the five cardinal human values. It aims to develop the five aspects of the child's personality that is physical, intellectual emotional, psychological, and spiritual aspects in the formative years. Lakhs of children have been blossomed into youth with good character through this movement over the years and there are thousands of teachers, known as Balvikas gurus guiding this young aspiring minds to a better tomorrow following the divine teachings and guidelines of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Before I end, I thank Baba for me for making me a part of this wonderful education system and I dedicate all my achievements at the Lotus feet of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai baba. I urge all the parents across the globe that every child born be blessed with Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas classes.



Apeksha Uniyal
Sikkim

'Education helps to earn livelihood but education teaches us how to live'.

The quotation above gives us an insight on what is the real meaning of Balvikas. Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas is one of the rarest gifts given to us by Swami himself in the year 1969 along with the Mahila Vibhag. This is our peaceful abode, where our Gurus guide the younger ones to blossom into humble and righteous leaders.

Schools may educate us about the worldly things i.e. mere information, while on the other hand Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas teaches us the pathway which leads us on how to live this life. We learn the basic human values and work towards imbibing good ethics in our life, from a young age. As we grow along with time these roots of good ethics, moral values also deepen thereby helping us to change and work as a responsible person.

The 9 years that we spent in Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas are one of the most fortunate years. The experiences, memories in Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas cannot be described in a few words they can only be felt. We are blessed indeed to experience how Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas basically helps the youngsters and even the elders to mould their character and thoughts in a positive way.

Our Gurus are like potters and we the children are like the dull clay, mud that has no value, but just as the potter starts mixing the ingredients to create

something beautiful, a pottery or an artefact, value gets added to it. Similarly, our Balvikas Gurus also teach us various things whether it is the enchanting stories from ancient mythology, or Vedas or group activities or even group songs and thereby shape our character and mindset for a better future.

This year all devotees, Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas children and even nature will rejoice with zeal as we come forward to join our hands and celebrate the 50 glorious years of precious Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas. In the last 50 years, Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas has been constantly contributing towards betterment of the society by leading the youngsters.

Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas has also joined and brought people from all over the world into a spiritual symphony, by making us realise that whichever religious path we choose to follow the goal is path to salvation.

We have always been said that the materialistic things have no value if they do not serve a purpose in service of others. Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas also emphasises on the primary role model of the students- their parents and teach them on how to create a positive environment for their whole family.

So, this year as we all gather around to celebrate this auspicious occasion, let us all pledge to lead an exemplary life and create a better place for the future progeny. As Swami says 'Dear students ,your life is my message' .Let us all thrive to work towards it and live in peace and love.



Pragya Rai
Sikkim

As Swami said, 'The end of Education is Character'. Our country has always been the treasure house of spiritual knowledge. However, due to irresponsible usage of technology and other unfortunate factors, it is easy to get swayed in this modern era. With Bal Vikas education, children will grow into responsible citizens who will re-establish Shanti, Prema and Dharma in this country. To ensure that we cultivate good character in our youth so that we can follow and implement the teachings of Swami in our daily life, it is extremely important for children to go to 'Bal Vikas'.

Balvikas is a noble movement which took roots in the year 1969 with the name of Bal Vihar and later in 1971 it was renamed as Balvikas. Our beloved Bhagawan always take a great interest and always emphasis on moral values to be developed in child for a better future. Bal means Child and Vikas means Flowering. That is to say expansion of consciousness in a child. Anyone can become great but a one can become good with Balvikas education. To create a good and peaceful society, Swami has opened Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas. Developing a good character itself is a great task now days and one hour fifteen minutes Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas class is fulfilling this tough task.

I would like to share my journey of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas. I was just 8 years old when my mother admitted me to Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas along with my elder sisters. I had to walk very far for attending class, but the distance was worth walking. Due to some reason, our Balvikas centre was closed for three years and then I was sent to Samithi Balvikas centre for group II.

I completed my 9 years of Balvikas in 2017 when I was 19 years old. That very year I completed my bachelor's degree and went for Masters. I am the first person who has completed 9 years of Balvikas course from my mandali. and these 9 years of Balvikas have guided me on the right path. I feel very lucky and fortunate that Swami has handpicked me for his Divine Mission.

It has been 50 years of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas and the same is running smoothly in different parts of the world and it has guided many young children onto the right path. That is the main motive of our beloved Swami for setting up Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas. Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas gives us the power of discrimination between right and wrong. In today's technologically equipped world, youth are not being able to discriminate between right and wrong, but the moral values taught in Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas classes helps us guide in taking decisions and to become a person of strong character from a tender age. As Swami said – Sow a seed of good thought and reap a fruit of good action, sow a seed of good habit, and reap a fruit of good habit, good character, and finally good fortune.

By inculcating good values & following the teachings of Swami, we can become an example to the society. I as a Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas Alumni and Guru will suggest every child I know to get admitted to Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas so that they can become role models for many.



Radhika Balachandran
Tamilnadu

Life is about experiencing God in every day moments, and, sharing them might just help others recount their blessings too!

My journey with Swami started as a child when my brother and I started to do regular bhajans on Thursdays at home with the limited repertoire of songs we knew then. Once while going through tough times, Swami gave us both a vision. My brother saw Shirdi Sai while I saw our Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai. Since then, the Sai incidences in our life multiplied. I soon got the golden opportunity to become a Balvikas student. My Guru late Smt. Lakshmi aunty of Coimbatore was simplicity personified. The seeds of spirituality she sowed in me, continue to grow even decades after my Balvikas sojourn. Swami became a constant companion of my internal dialogues.

During my first pre-sevadal service at Kodaikanal I received a saree personally handed out by the Lord. My young mind noted that it was seva that was what pleased our Lord most. Swami guided me through dreams at various stages in life, clarifying doubts and giving reassurances. However, the incident I most cherish is in the year 1997, in Whitefield, when He came away from the designated carpeted path to the corner where I was sitting with my mother holding my wedding invitation card and akshatha. He delicately pulled the card from my hand and sprinkled *Akshatha* on my head as I beheld my divine Father through misty eyes.

My mother's spiritual nature and father's philanthropic and positive mentality are major influences in my life, and I thank Swami wholeheartedly for giving me parents worthy of emulation. As a young mother, when I started teaching my first born slokas, I took a

few more neighborhood children into my fold thus seamlessly becoming a Balvikas guru. When I left my career to become a full-time mom, little did I realise that Swami was preparing me for something more fulfilling. From then, the experiences of tending the Balvikas children and working together with Gurus on training sessions, Talent search, cultural programs, exhibitions, parenting workshops etc. have made me realize how Swami slowly but steadily imbibes in us the purity of thought leading to unity of purpose and ultimately Divinity in every task performed.

The Sai organization provides the ground to keep us in Constant Integrated Awareness through Seva in various forms and that is where I am reminded of the Bhagawad Gita sloka "Yogakshemam Vahamyaham". It is so true! As we dive into serving the Lord wholeheartedly he looks after all our needs both material and spiritual. My children have both completed the 9 year Balvikas programme, and I am confident that they will play their roles effectively as per His will. It is this surrender that makes the Sai devotee free from the normal worldly stress and tension of what the future holds.

So today, as part of the Balvikas wing and as an active contributor to Vidya Vahini (a mission launched by Swami to provide integral education to schools in an innovative way), I can only thank the benevolent Lord for giving me an opportunity to utilize His given talents to aid His work and confer me with joy. How selfless He is! Handing the reigns to him, life becomes a breeze. It is only our ego that makes it burdensome. Through the Sai organization - a spiritual gym - He also gave me the satsang of many lovely souls. And so, I smile, as I recollect the words of our Master, "Your smile should show the confidence in My decisions for you."



Nivedita Vasili
Telangana

...A silent revolution to reform the Society

“Where does this composure come from”? “How do you stay calm in difficult situations”? are some of the questions posed by my friends, colleagues, elders, several times... to be honest and truthful, I owe this to Bhagawan's immense grace for blessing me to be a Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas student. The journey started at the age of four.

As I look back into my life to ponder how Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas has helped me to shape up as an individual that I am today... many memories come back to me and it is overwhelming.

The first sloka 'Vakrathunda Mahakaya' that I learnt, taught me that Lord Ganesha removes all the obstacles that come on your way whenever you start any good work. Chanting slokas and Vedam at high pitch (almost shouting with ecstasy) in a group was real fun and gave me a lot of joy. Unknowingly, it drove away my shyness. In my class 6th, I chanted 'Ganananthwa' at my school competition and won 1st prize without any preparation. Needless to say that I needed no preparation as we were chanting it quite often. Winning this prize was a turning point in my life. I gained so much confidence that I started participating in competitions like essay writing, elocution, pick and speak and never went back home without a prize.

Silent sitting and Jyothi meditation were taught to us by one of my Gurus and this helped me a lot during my exams especially the one with Maths. Whenever I was tensed, I used to sit in front of the altar and do

Jyothi meditation and this used to relieve me of the exam anxiety. Unknowingly, this process helped me to stay calm and balanced. When I was in 5th class our family was in Puttaparthi for Dassera celebrations. As per the advice of my father I sat to meditate in Poornachandra auditorium after Swami left the stage and the Yagna was going on. I realized that there was no Jyothi to do so and prayed to Swami for his photograph so that I could look at Swami's picture and close my eyes to meditate. As I prayed so and opened my eyes, to my utter dismay, I saw a Swami's photograph on my lap which read “I will protect you as the eyelids protect the eyes”. This incident left a lasting impression on me and I was assured by Swami that He is always with me.

Bal Vikas Gurus introduce children to Seva and my Guru Smt.Susheela garu insisted us to serve in water camps during summer vacation. Pouring water in glasses, serving buttermilk, taking chances to fill the buckets was thoroughly enjoyed and during such time I developed a lot of interest in Seva as it gave me a lot of satisfaction. As I grew, my desire to serve also grew.

Few of my seniors joined Swami's Institute and with Swami's grace I joined the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Anantapur campus and did my B.Sc and M.Sc in Food Science and Nutrition. I had the rarest of the rare privileges of receiving the Gold medal for Master's Program from the Divine hands. After passing out from the Institute, I actively participated in Samithi activities. In 2008 I was

nominated as District Youth Coordinator for Mahilas for Ranga Reddy district and subsequently as State Youth Coordinator for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in 2016 and now hold the post for the Telangana state.

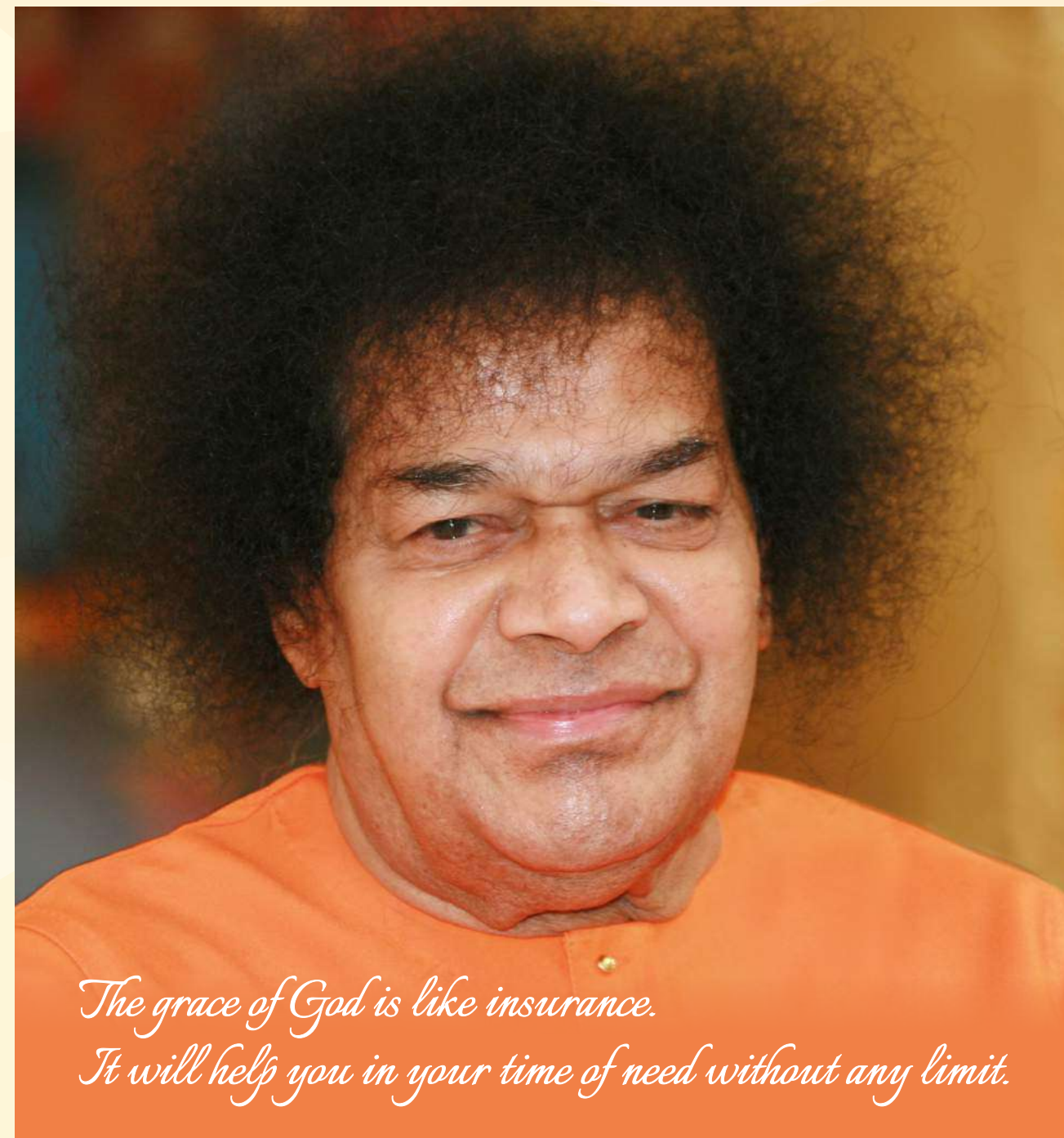
The seeds of virtue and values had been sown in my heart which helped me to grow into a tree that helps those in distress to rest under its shade.

Several blessed children are taught values by

dedicated and committed Gurus and these children grow into individuals with character and integrity and impact the society in a positive way, the magnitude of which is immeasurable.

This is the silent revolution that has been taking place with the Divine will of our Sai Maa since 50 years and will continue for the years to come.

Gratitude to Sai Maa and Kudos to Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas, 50 years and more...



*The grace of God is like insurance.
It will help you in your time of need without any limit.*



Akarsh Bajpai
Uttar Pradesh

Our divine mother, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba took birth on this Earth in this Yuga as the Purna Avatar to raise His children to their true nature, to free them from the cycle of life and death. He is the only Avatar who not only showed His divinity but also apprised us of our innate divinity. Swami says that His biggest miracle is the transformation of the human mind. He raised generations of students who walk on the path of truth, righteousness with hearts filled with love for their Divine Teacher, our Beloved Swami.

I joined Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas at the age of 11. I remember going to my first class reluctantly forced by my mother but after that one hour, there was something about the class that made me look forward to the next one. Soon I was drawn by the love and care of my Bal Vikas guru. The routine of chanting shlokas, singing bhajans, silent sitting, listening to stories and value-oriented games, defined my lifestyle as I grew up. Bal Vikas classes sparked a yearning for Swami within me. I started participating in Samithi bhajans and seva activities regularly. I tried to do everything that could please Swami and would give me a chance to go near Him. I was then blessed with a chance to go to Puttaparthi for Prashanthi Seva and it was a touching and transforming experience. For the first time, I experienced a deep strong yearning for Swami. My heart melted to see how Swami showered love on His devotees and how His devotees did seva with so much of love and dedication. The attention Swami gives by the smallest of gestures of love, sacrifice and sadhana made me understand how a simple tiny thing made all the

difference in the world and could bring you closer to Him. To top it all, I got to listen the experiences of so many devotees. I was deeply touched and inspired to visit Prashanthi Nilayam again, to serve at His Lotus feet. Thus, I began to reinvent my life with more discipline and determination, I doubled my efforts to get closer to Swami. I decided to quit watching television. I practiced honesty and promised Him not to cheat in examinations. Every day I spared some time to thinking about Him and His message. Ultimately, Swami blessed me with a seat in His university. This gave me the golden opportunity to learn more about Swami from His people, who worked for Him and made their life His message. My understanding and conviction in following Swami's teachings grew manifolds. I now practice thinking of each task as His work and try to accomplish it with perfection, aiming to please Him. I realized that the ultimate goal of my life is to reach Him and be one with Him. That is the transformation and awakening He has brought about in me through years of Bal Vikas.

This is the 50th year since the inception of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas. This magnificent movement has touched the lives of millions of students and through them, their families worldwide and shaped them into socially responsible, professionally adept and spiritually aware human beings. With Bhagwan's love, Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas gurus are tackling the issues of the Kaliyuga in changing world as the Bal Vikas movement with its divine magnanimity is the only solution to the salvage humanity.



Pooja Sengupta
West Bengal

Sri Sathya Sai Baba ~ *“Dear Children! Your life is like a seed. Whatever seed is planted, that corresponding tree will sprout out of it. This concept of reaction is well understood and accepted by citizens of Bharath. You must nurture this seed of life into a tree, and make efforts to relish the fruits of bliss and happiness that the tree bears. If the plant in its tender age were to become crooked and get a curved shape, then the whole tree too will be crooked. So, ensure that this tender period of life is spent in a fruitful and sacred manner. Only if it is tended and made to grow properly will it blossom forth and shine in beauty and splendour.”*

When one receives education that is based on truth and eternal values, one will be able to achieve liberation without having to go through the process of submergence in Samsara. Today, unfortunately injustice, hatred and jealousy are showing their ugly head. I am hoping that you boys and girls of the Bal Vikas, will grow into such citizens who will establish **Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prem, Ahimsa** in this country. Therefore, come forward to get the benefit of such education.”

This is what our beloved Mother Sai had envisioned for all of us when he began the Balvikas movement in the year 1969 and shaped every aspect of it with his direct guidelines to students and gurus. This year is even more special as this divine and glorious movement marks its 50th Year.

Over the years the movement has impacted many lives and have transformed them into ideal citizens. For every student and alumnus, Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas is the foundation of life as it gives meaning to our lives.

As a child, Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas was my solution to all my curiosities ,it made me realise the essence of happiness , Bal Vikas has led me to understand the significance of being part of a family, to respect and value parents, elders and each member of the family. As regards Society, its inculcated respect for every individual while inspiring me to be aware of the divine spark in each one, it also taught me to love my motherland, understand and respect our great culture. It has granted me the confidence to live life as it's supposed to be lived - Simple Living- High Thinking, enormously influencing my thinking and reasoning abilities in personal as well as professional life. But above all Sri Sathya Sai balvikas has brought me closer to my Swami, it has made me realise his presence where I know that Swami is as close to me as I think Him to be.

Swami visualized a world of peace and happiness. It is His concern for the good of entire mankind and for the re-establishment of 'Sanathana Dharma' that He took human form, thus this is a year not only of celebration but a year when, we must light the lamp of love first in our hearts and take a pledge that as true messengers of Sai we must continue to strengthen the fabric of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas movement for the future generations.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba ~ *“You should light the lamp of morality and righteousness that was the tradition of Bharat. You have to make it shine in all brilliance to illumine the world - let this be your vow, let this be your creed and religion; then only will peace and auspiciousness dawn and reign in the world in full glory.”*

5D's

Dedicate yourself to every **duty** without ego, to take you to true **devotion**, and develop **discipline** within. **Discriminate** every work (is it good or bad, right or wrong), and in turn move with **determination** to experience Divinity.

